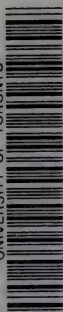


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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 1881

IN THE YEAR 1881

AND FOR THE YEAR 1882

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VALUABLE TESTIMONIALS

IN FAVOR OF THIS GREAT PROTESTANT NOVEL

FROM FATHER GAVAZZI.

NEW YORK HOTEL, March 31, 1853.

To Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

GENTLEMEN,—I have received with much pleasure the valuable work by Miss Sinclair. I had already seen it; but it is a work which can never be too often read, or too highly appreciated. God grant that the efforts of all true Christians, in the mission of enlightening our brethren under the dominion of Jesuitism, may be successful. It is a work of great difficulty—as the enemies we have to combat are artful and all-powerful. But God is more powerful than they; and his inspiration will not be wanting to help us to destroy this dark and Satanic institution.

Imbued with these thoughts, I cannot but feel grateful to you for having called my attention to this most useful and valuable of works; and I trust that under the blessing of heaven this work will help to free the liberties of America from the yoke of Jesuitism.

I have the honor to be, your devoted servant,

ALESSANDRO GAVAZZI.

FROM THE REV. NICHOLAS MURRAY, D.D. (the celebrated "KIRWAN").

Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

ELIZABETHTOWN, Feb. 1, 1853.

GENTLEMEN,—Miss SINCLAIR has obtained for herself quite a reputation, and in the very best paths of literary pursuit. She writes to do good; and with the genial warmth and true sentiment of HANNAH MORE. A fitting sequel is *Beatrice* to her *Papist Legends and Bible Truths*, in which she terribly exposed the unmeaning frivolity and vast absurdity of Romanism. In *Beatrice* she taxes all her energies, and the result is a work of deep interest and great power. Its object is to expose the deceptive arts of Popery and of the Jesuits; and this it does with great truthfulness and effect.

It cannot be otherwise than greatly useful in aiding to remove from the world the great curse of humanity—Popery: May it be read in every house and hamlet in America.

Truly yours, N. MURRAY.

FROM REV. THOS. E. BOND, D.D.,

Editor of the *New York Christian Advocate and Journal*.

Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

GENTLEMEN,—I have read *Beatrice* with great interest, and beg you to accept my thanks, as a Protestant, for the timely issue of a work so well calculated to expose the wiles of the most insidious and dangerous enemy of the Truth of God the world has ever known.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient and humble servant,

THOS. E. BOND, Sen.

FROM REV. GARDINER SPRING, D.D.,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Brick Church, New York.

Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

GENTS,—*Beatrice* is a good book, and worthy of its distinguished author. It is well written, and calculated, at the present time, to be useful. As an exhibition of the practical errors of the Roman Catholic Church it deserves a wide circulation. Portions of the work are also argumentative, and the argument is sound.

Yours respectfully, GARDINER SPRING.

FROM REV. SAMUEL SEABURY,

Rector of the Church of the Annunciation, New York.

To Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

GENTLEMEN,—I thank you for your copy of *Beatrice*, which I have read with pleasure. Although differing from the writer in some important matters, yet I approve of several features of the work, and particularly of its exposure of the doctrine of *blind obedience* as inculcated and practised in the Romish communion. To your question, whether you may use my name as sanctioning the publication of the work, I reply in the affirmative, and am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant, SAMUEL SEABURY.

Extract of a Letter from REV. JOSEPH H. PRICE, D.D.,

Rector of St. Stephen's Church.

To Messrs. DE WITT & DAVENPORT,

GENTLEMEN,—I would be glad to see the book (*Beatrice*) extensively circulated.

Yours truly, JOSEPH H. PRICE.

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BEATRICE;

OR,

THE UNKNOWN RELATIVES.

BY CATHERINE SINCLAIR,

AUTHOR OF

"MODERN ACCOMPLISHMENTS," "HOLIDAY HOUSE," "SIR EDWARD GRAHAM,"
"JANE BOUVERIE," "THE JOURNEY OF LIFE," ETC.

"If authors must write, they had better compose
Their stories too marvellous almost for prose;
Add some incidents, too, which are strange above measure."

Bath Guide

FOURTH EDITION.

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NEW YORK:

DE WITT & DAVENPORT, PUBLISHERS.

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PREFACE.

"But oh! my soul, avoid the wondrous maze,
Where reason lost in endless error strays."

COWPER.

THE object of this narrative is to portray, for the consideration of young girls now first emerging into society, the enlightened happiness derived from the religion of England, founded on the Bible, contrasted with the misery arising from the superstition of Italy, founded on the Breviary; and in exemplifying both from the best authorities, it has been done with a most careful and most laborious reference to the standard authors of the English Church, and of the Popish persuasion.

If an India-rubber quill could be invented to rub out every word that should not be written, the author would be particularly happy to obtain the advantage of it on this occasion, as she never felt more deeply responsible for the use she makes of her own pen, though during many long years it has been her daily fervent prayer that whatever she writes amiss, however good the intention, may be at once and for ever forgotten. Having been much gratified lately, and most agreeably surprised, by the very favourable reception given to the volume she recently dedicated to her nieces, "Popish Legends and Bible Truths," in which all the thoughts or anecdotes that seemed more peculiarly to bear on the subject of English Romanism were recorded, the author has been induced to follow up the subject by embodying in a fictitious narrative, what she knows to be true, of the irreconcilable hostility with which the Italian school of superstition looks upon the moral principles and domestic peace of a happy English fire-side. As the machinations of Popish emissaries to effect a division of faith and of feeling between families, have been hitherto chiefly directed, and chiefly successful, among ladies, generally very juvenile ones, it is hoped that the author may not be

considered presumptuous in attempting thus to warn the young against being ensnared, who have not all had the same sad opportunities as herself, to observe the rise, progress, and most calamitous termination of a taste for the excitements of Romanism.*

Cardinal Pole offered the Pope in his day to subjugate England by "dealing with the consciences of dying men;" but though that plan is by no means now neglected, much more is done in the present time by dealing with the consciences of richly endowed ladies. The author can assure her young readers, and she entreats them seriously to consider the statement, which is very seriously and sorrowfully made, that among her own personal acquaintances there are already those who have left their heart-broken parents for ever, those who are now buried in foreign convents, those who have relinquished their beautiful estates, those who have beggared themselves of all they ever possessed, those who are shut up in a lunatic asylum, and those who have died in such a fever of popish perplexity, that the doctors declared, had they lived it would have been in a state of derangement.

All this began, like the fall of Eve, from mere unjustifiable curiosity, excited by those who wish to mislead the inquirer.

A young girl is induced by a proselyting friend to go and hear the "most delightful music" at a Popish chapel, and to visit in a Popish house, where religion, she is assured, is the subject of all others that shall never be mentioned to her; and there she becomes acquainted with a Romish priest, who is warranted never to allude to religious differences, and who lends her books that she is told any Protestant might read with pleasure. The author was told last winter by a young lady of fifteen, the only child of an esteemed landed proprietor, that when walking with her governess lately in a public garden, they were stopped by a "Sister of Charity," who offered them some tracts to read, and said as she presented them, that if they wished for an explanation, they had only to ring at the bell of her convent, and to ask for "Sister Margaret." Some less prudent young ladies might have been tempted by the romance of such an adventure to go, and neither fathers, brothers, nor legislators can adequately protect a girl from such devices unless she also protects herself by avoiding them. As the first step in all such cases is made very easy and agree-

* Kaleidoscope of Anecdotes.

able, the author has endeavoured, in these volumes, to exemplify the end to which such beginnings lead. Few young ladies in the whirl of education have leisure systematically to study those important questions, which will now be constantly obtruded unasked on their notice, but which involve the whole happiness for time and eternity of themselves, as well as the whole peace of their parents and relatives; therefore the author has endeavoured in this narrative, as well as in her previous work on Popish Legends, to place the result of many years' prayerful reading in a small compass before those she earnestly wishes to serve, if they will favour her with their kind consideration.

It is to be hoped that the strong good sense of English minds may long continue to be their salutary protection against the Church of "Our Lady Star of the Sea!" a name much more fit for the Arabian Nights than for Christian teachers, but which is very attractive to young lovers of the imaginative and picturesque, as well as the whole gorgeous paraphernalia of Romish pageantry. The author was favoured with a description of a Popish dignitary entering one of the provincial towns of England in state, the first carriage drawn by four grey horses, and another following. At a levee which ensued the ladies kissed hands! and the clergymen knelt. Such more than royal homage claimed and bestowed had so bewildering an effect on the imagination of some excitable spectators, that several Protestant ladies conformed to this new custom, yielded to this total prostration of female dignity, and kissed the diamond ring, emblematical of Popish authority. In return for their almost delirious homage a benignant hope was expressed, not very likely to be disappointed, that they shall soon become members of the Popish flock. There is a keen canvass constantly going on to induce young people to attend such dramatic scenes; the author herself has been frequently invited to witness them; but the doing so is at a hazard which nothing can justify any one for incurring. There is a strange influence in vast pretensions which few have the moral courage to resist; and if a Grand Mufti of London and Westminster, bringing his diploma, were to appear in England, claiming all the honours due to Grand Mufti-ism, the safest plan would be to avoid him, as those once in his presence, if invited by a card inscribed in large characters "TO MEET THE GRAND MUFTI," would feel, if they

went, partly pledged to meet him on the terms expected, and would find it very difficult not in some degree to fulfil his expectations of receiving perfectly prostrate reverence. The effect of example, assisted by the influence of a gorgeous dress and a diamond ring, probably led people on the occasion specified into lengths of temporary enthusiasm which they did not previously contemplate; but the kissing of a Popish dignitary's hand, or of the ring that adorns it, if meant as a religious act, is a virtual acknowledgment of Papal supremacy; and if as a mere demonstration of drawing-room politeness, the ladies then reverse what has usually been towards them the order of etiquette. Protestant ladies entering such a scene, place themselves in a very false position indeed, by thus assisting to engraft a foreign supremacy as well as a foreign religion on the English tree of civil and religious liberty.

Those girls who expatiate in joyous freedom along the daisied meadows of England, the sun shining over their heads, and the flowers blooming around their path, would not be easily persuaded to make their permanent abode, at the bottom of a coal-pit; nevertheless if any persons had an interest in persuading them to do so, the most urgent advice of their best friends would be, not to approach the verge, not to listen to those who would entice them onwards, and if tempted rashly to descend one step, that they should first look down into the very-lowest depths, that they might fully anticipate the end from the beginning, and know to what they were consigning themselves. Therefore the author having lost no opportunity to inform herself on the subject, has most humbly endeavoured on the present occasion to raise a finger-post which shall give due warning of a danger impending over every individual girl in England now, to her freedom and her happiness. Not many years ago, the mother of a happy cheerful family, known to the author, expressed a wish, for once, to see all the wonders of the Popish ritual, and after some slight opposition from her Protestant husband, she obtained leave to take her daughters therê, and went. Nothing more was said between the parents upon that subject till several months afterwards, when it was unexpectedly discovered that the young ladies clandestinely wore crucifixes. Then the unhappy father, on investigation, to his astonishment ascertained that their visits to the chapel and to the priests had been secretly continued, till

his whole family around him had become Papists. He died soon after, literally of a broken heart, his wife and daughters live now in a foreign convent, and his son, relinquishing his whole inheritance, became a Popish priest.

Who has not read, with a just indignation, that it was necessary for the Principal of Glenalmond College to publish a letter in the newspapers remonstrating with a Popish priest for clandestinely lending books of Romish theology to his pupils? and in an English public school it was discovered lately, to the inexpressible grief of the parents, that two pupils had been privately perverted by similar means; yet British fathers abroad, placing their children in foreign convents for the benefit of accomplishments, do so on a mere vague understanding that their religion shall not be tampered with! They might as judiciously dip a white dress into the dyer's vat of black, on the positive assurance that it shall come out white again! The author could name one young lady of fortune, who was entrusted to the care of a Popish governess, on a solemn agreement that she was never to be spoken to on the subject of religion; but the unfortunate parents omitted to stipulate also that she was not to be lent any books on Romanism, therefore she had a complete course administered to her of the most enticing Popish works, which produced their almost inevitable effect in teaching the young pupil to prefer a religion of fancy and fiction to one of sober and truthful reality. She was lately, of course, "received" into the Romish Church.

The author read a letter, some time since, from an English nun in a foreign convent, mentioning that the Virgin Mary is often seen in their garden, and that one of the nuns had obtained a vision of her there very recently—perhaps, sowing the seeds of Popery! Such is the result of solitude, sleeplessness, fasting, and a very excited imagination!

A relation of the author's printed for private circulation once, and sent her a copy of the following curious narrative: He was travelling on the continent, about fifteen years ago, when, seeing a funeral procession enter a church, he followed to witness the solemn rite. On an open bier lay the corpse of a lovely young girl, and beside it stood her sister, whose beauty and grief so moved the young Scotchman, that he gazed at her earnestly and mournfully, till quite on a sudden she looked up, and sprung forward, with an exclamation of devout reverence, declaring, in an ecstasy of rapture, that she had prayed

all the morning to her patron, St. Sebastian, for comfort, and that here he had come in person to console her. The astonished traveller, a shy, reserved man, unaccustomed to Popish visions, felt greatly startled on finding himself thus the subject of one; but became afterwards so interested in the adventure, that he had his own picture done, by an eminent Italian master, in the character of St. Sebastian, which may still be seen in his collection, stuck full of arrows.

In the present day, many children are allowed no imaginative reading, except on religion. The universal craving which they all have for something supernatural, used to be humoured by allowing their young fancies to expand over the harmless wonders of "Mother Bunch;" but now their books of relaxation or amusement consist of conversations on science or on history,—very dry, often, to the young pupil, who sits down with rapture afterwards to read of modern visions and miracles, of guardian angels visibly appearing, of speaking trees and talking birds, of dark rivers flowing over golden sands, and miraculous flowers, that droop when a child is naughty, and hold up their heads again as soon as he becomes good. These "very pretty books" have generally a frontispiece, resembling those prints and images now so sadly in vogue for school-rooms and nurseries, in which a visible guardian angel leads a child onwards, "with upturned eyes," who is evidently walking straight to Rome. These are the fairy tales of the present day, but written with a purpose; and that purpose is—anything but Protestant!

The object of Romanism is, entirely to subjugate the will and the intellect; therefore, as Niebuhr says of the Italians, their slavish subjection to the Church is "ghastly death." He adds, "I am perfectly correct in saying that, even among the laity, you cannot discover a vestige of piety. The life of the Italian is little more than an animal one, and he is not much better than an ape endowed with speech. There is nowhere a spark of originality or truthfulness. Slavery and misery have even extinguished all acute susceptibility to sensual enjoyments; and there is, I am sure, no people on the face of the earth more thoroughly *ennuyé*, and more oppressed with a sense of their own existence, than the Romans. Their whole life is a vegetation." Thus it becomes with all nations, or individuals, whose misfortune it is to fall under the tuition of Papal tyranny. May English girls long remain in the free

and happy exercise of that mental and personal liberty in a domestic home, of which none can deprive them, unless they deprive themselves, by heedlessly venturing among the rocks and quicksands of Romanism, which they will now be often asked to do, probably in a tone of mere jest—perhaps at first to hear some very fine singing, or to meet some very eminent Popish dignitary; but it all turns to very serious earnest at last. A girl who blindly rushes into conventual life, reduces herself to the same state as if every relative God ever gave her had died in a day; and it were well to pause till she has come to very mature judgment, before venturing beyond the help of old and tried friends, into the power of those who sell and buy pardons for any offence.

In England, the friends of the most abject criminal, or the most delirious maniac, may gain uncontrolled access to certify that she is treated with kindness and propriety; besides which indispensable protection, the inmates of a prison, or of a lunatic asylum, have the inestimable privilege of being occasionally visited by the authorized Crown officers, to take legal proof that they are either justly or willingly incarcerated; but a convent is the only spot in her Majesty's wide dominions to which the law of British liberty does not extend. It is better, perhaps, for the community that those whose minds have got into a morbid state, should thus voluntarily imprison themselves while the delusion lasts, but care should be taken, that if cured, they can emerge into liberty again. In Italy it is considered that where the manners are so dissolute, the only safety for "unprotected females" is in a convent; but experience has shown, that the propriety of Englishwomen can be preserved in their own families without having recourse to solitary imprisonment. The Protestants are one great anti-slavery society, anxious to preserve for all men that "liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free," but the Papists make their votaries, bodily and mentally, slaves, who buy liberty in this world to sin, and in another world an escape from the punishment of having sinned.

A lively author describing his visit, in 1843, to the Ursuline Convent at Cork, says:* "Here I was in the room with a real live nun, pretty and pale ————— I wonder, has she any of her sisterhood immured in *oubliettes* down below? Is it policy, or hypocrisy, or reality? These nuns affect extreme

* Titmarsh's Irish Sketch-book.

happiness and content with their condition, a smiling beatitude which they insist belongs peculiarly to them, and about which, the only doubtful point is, the manner in which it is produced before strangers.

“—— Is it possible that I shall see a nun’s cell? Do I not recollect the nun’s cell in *The Monk*, or in *The Romance of the Forest*? or, if not there, at any rate in a thousand noble romances, read in early days of half-holiday perhaps—romances at twopence a volume. Here is the cell. I took off my hat and examined the little room with much curious wonder and reverence. There was an iron bed, with comfortable curtains of green serge. There was a little clothes-chest of yellow-wood neatly cleaned, and a wooden chair beside it, and a desk on the chest, and about six pictures on the wall—little religious pictures; a saint with gilt paper round him, and other sad little subjects calculated to make the inmate of the cell think of the sufferings of the saints and martyrs; then there was a little crucifix and a wax-candle on a ledge. And here was the place where the poor black-veiled things were to pass their lives for ever!

“The poor nun’s Convent-museum of gimcracks was displayed in great state; there were spars in one drawer, and, I think, a Chinese shoe and some Indian wares in another; and some medals of the Popes, and a couple of score of coins; and a clean glass-case full of antique works of French theology of the distant period of Louis XV., to judge by the bindings,—and this formed the main part of the museum. ‘The chief objects were gathered together by a single nun,’ said the sister with a look of wonder; and she went prattling on, and leading us hither and thither, like a child showing her toys. What strange mixture of pity and pleasure is it which comes over you sometimes, when a child takes you by the hand, and leads you up solemnly to some little treasure of its own—a feather, or a string of glass beads! I declare I have sometimes looked at such with more delight than at diamonds; and felt the same sort of soft wonder in examining the nun’s little treasure-chamber.”

“In the *grille* is a little wicket and a ledge before it. It is to this wicket that women are brought to kneel; and a bishop is in the chapel on the other side, and takes their hands in his, and receives their vows. I had never seen the like before, and own that I felt a sort of shudder at looking at the place.

There rest the girl's knees as she offers herself up, and forswears the sacred affections which God gave her; there she kneels and denies for ever the beautiful duties of her being,—there she kneels and commits suicide on her heart. O, honest Martin Luther! thank God, you came to pull that wicked, unnatural altar down."

"I came out of the place quite sick; and looking before me—there, thank God! was the blue spire of Monkstown church, soaring up into the free sky,—a river in front rolling away to the sea,—liberty, sunshine, all sorts of glad life and motion, round about: and I couldn't but thank Heaven for it, and the Being whose service is freedom, and who has given us affections that we may use them—not smother and kill them; and a noble world to live in, that we may admire it and Him who made it—not shrink from it, as though we dared not live there, but must turn our backs upon it and its bountiful Provider. I declare I think, for my part, that we have as much right to permit Suttee in India, as to allow women in the United Kingdom to take these wicked vows, or Popish bishops to receive them; and that Government had as good a right to interfere in such cases, as the police has to prevent a man from hanging himself, or the doctor to refuse a glass of prussic acid to any one who may have a wish to go out of the world."

Let us concede that suffering, and mental and bodily debasement, are the things most agreeable to Heaven, and there is no knowing where such piety may stop. We shall see men, like Hindoos, with their arms withered upright in the air, or English faqueers burying themselves alive in their gardens, or attempting to sit upon nothing in the air,—or, like the prophets of Baal, hacking themselves with knives. Can there be any foundation for believing that in this cheerful and beautiful world of God's creation, where every man is an invited guest, surrounded with blessings, he is bound in gratitude to make himself as miserable as possible,—to chain down his honest thoughts, to mutilate his friendly affections, and to relinquish all his natural enjoyments?

A little girl from the convent at New Hall, on a visit once to that of Cork, exclaimed with delighted astonishment on hearing that the Irish nuns were allowed to amuse themselves with making hay. The Maynooth students are expelled if

they read a Protestant newspaper.* They begin term with a "retreat" of a week, which time they are made to pass in silence; and this silent system, considered too cruel for prison discipline, is acknowledged to be in frequent use for the children at Norwood and other places of Popish education. It has a most crushing effect on the intellect and spirits, producing a bewilderment and prostration of mind which prepares the victim to believe anything or nothing, as may be required. If the most acute philosopher tried the rather tedious experiment of gazing intensely at a white-washed wall for a week, he would probably find his intellect become at last a perfect *carte blanche*; and yet this is the stupifying process to which children are subjected as a suitable preparation for a life of credulity and seclusion afterwards, when they must learn, both literally and metaphorically, to consider that black is white, in actions as well as in substances, if commanded to do so.

Bonacina, a Jesuit author, says, "A mother is guiltless who wishes the death of her daughters, when, by reason of their deformity or poverty, she cannot marry them to her heart's desire." This sentence of death on plain young ladies might alarm some, and should make many pause before they venture to join a sect which forbids men to marry, and at the same time sanctions any mother in wishing those daughters in another world who are unlikely to marry advantageously in this. The only alternative left is, of course, a convent, that mournful scene of blank desolation, terror-struck devotion, and objectless despair. No home-born happiness, sprung from mutual affection, is there—no familiar discussions—no intellectual pursuits—no play of humour, to beguile the lagging hours, to palliate dulness, to adorn existence, to give time a relish, or to occupy an unfurnished mind. No parents or brothers are there, to unite in studying the sacred message of God to each living soul, and to find out new beauties together. The Divine Saviour of man compares the affection he feels for his own people to that of a father or of a brother; but how can such ties be understood by a lonely nun, frozen into a solitary iceberg of cold-hearted indifference? The nature of a nun is from the hour of her profession to be like no other human nature, after the priest has convinced her that

* Titmarsh's Irish Sketch-book.

religion is his accomplice in commanding a life of solitary heartlessness, of voluntary austerities, of grovelling heathenisms, and of self-inflicted misfortunes. The whole power of the screw is supplied in a convent by the doctrine of blind obedience; while the hourly repetition from day to day, and from year to year, of the same habits and the same prayers, becomes at last like the rocking of a cradle for putting the mind, heart, and conscience to sleep.

The early Reformers justly called a confessional "the slaughter-house of conscience." It is well known to have indeed proved so to both priests and penitents, by familiarising them to the contemplation of sin, while each instructs the other in a knowledge of its modes and temptations. A relation of the author's, who once saw a person fall out of a four-pair of stairs window, said that when vainly endeavouring to obliterate the scene from his memory, he would gladly give 100*l.* to forget the sight; but if forgetfulness could be bought, and if confession be all that is represented, many might willingly give more than double the sum if they could forget all that is taught them in the confessional, and a very advantageous bargain it would be. Protestants may sometimes grow old in happy unconsciousness of many vices which are, in a Popish confessional, forced on the consideration of the very youngest members of society; who might often be inclined to say, with the poet Gray,

"——— where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise."

Let it be for a moment supposed that the careful mother of a young family resolves herself to act as confessor to her own children, and feeling some day in a particularly instructive mood, she calls up for examination the eldest inmate of the nursery, a fine, frolicsome, clever boy. Anxious about his morals and religion, she begins with a look of earnest and very ominous suspicion,—“My dear little pet, many children hide their catechism-book on Sunday mornings, to escape the trouble of repeating it. Have you ever done so? Your little cousin was sent once to give a blind beggar half-a-crown, but he gave only one of his own half-pence and kept the larger sum to spend on whipping-tops. Did you never do so? My darling boy, tell me, have you sometimes put your black-leather Bible-cover over a story-book, and made your tutor

believe you were studying the one when you were only idling over the other? Such tricks are very often tried, and generally succeed. When I am busily occupied, every day, my dear child, with the housekeeper, giving out stores, do you never slip into your pocket a handful of those delicious French plums on a tray near the door? Do you ever pretend to have a violent cough, that your tutor may give you some of his excellent lozenges, and that he may let you remain away from church? My own jewel of a boy, tell me truly; have you sometimes gone without my leave to the grocer's for a dozen of oranges or a box of figs, and knowing I never could detect you, put them down to my account?" The greatly enlightened boy, with his eyes now very wide open, hurries back to the nursery, thinking what an ignorant good-sort-of-idiot he has hitherto been, and having learned a lesson from his worthy mother, never afterwards to be forgotten, there now arises a most unprecedented disappearance of catechisms, sugar-plums, and half-crowns, while the affectionate parent exhausts her ingenuity to invent penances for her unfortunate son, and wonders much over the ingenious wickedness of boyhood.

The author lived totally alone for a week once in her father's old Highland Castle, where finding a copy of Buchan's "Domestic Medicine," she enlivened her solitude by a careful study of all the sufferings incident to the human frame, till, as a natural consequence, she fancied in herself a tendency to every complaint therein described. Had a doctor been within reach to prescribe bleeding, blistering, and fasting, she might easily have been made a pitiable hypochondriac for life; and if there were medical men to visit people every day, and to suggest symptoms, there are many now in such perfect health that they scarcely know they have a body at all, who might be persuaded into becoming confirmed invalids. Let it be supposed that Doctor So-and-so sets up as a medical confessor to find out the maladies of those who are well. He calls on one of his healthiest patients, and after solemnly feeling his pulse, looks with anxious scrutiny in his face, saying,—“Do you feel any tendency to a polypus in the nose?”

“Not that I know of,” replies the startled patient; “how does it begin?”

“Have you never felt a tickling sensation at the point? a great coldness on a frosty day, a burning heat when you sit before the fire, and a great blueness of colour after bathing?”

"Certainly, doctor," replies the unfortunate invalid; "if these be the symptoms, I must confess to polypus."

"Then let me also examine whether you are in any danger of heart-complaint, as many die before finding out they have the slightest tendency. Do you sometimes feel a restlessness when obliged to sit long still,—a tendency to start at any unexpected explosion,—a chilliness in your feet when travelling long journeys, and a considerable irritability at home when contradicted? a great sensation of emptiness before dinner, and a most uncomfortable oppression from fulness after it?"

"Certainly; then, doctor, you think I have heart-complaint," replies the alarmed patient, already feeling an unusual palpitation; "what remedy do you prescribe?"

"Let me first ascertain," continues the persevering and judicious medical confessor, "whether you have a tendency to gout. Do you sometimes feel a craving appetite for turtle and venison? Do you find it necessary afterwards to drink champagne and claret? Have you often restless nights and startling dreams? Do you feel peevishly irritable after dinner, and as if everything in life were going amiss?"

"Doctor, you know me better than I ever knew myself. All these symptoms then prove that I really am about to be afflicted with polypus, heart-complaint, and gout. Am I quite incurable?"

"We shall try the effect of solitary confinement, starving, bleeding, physicking, and want of sleep," replies the doctor, rising to go; "you must watch your own symptoms incessantly, and minutely report them all to me every morning."

Thus a morbid state of mind would very soon be engendered, and while the most healthy symptoms of the body might be called by the medical confessor disease, thus also the Popish confessor represents as deadly sins the common use of speech, the free interchange of opinions, the daily intercourse of domestic life, the enjoyment of necessary food, and an unbroken rest throughout the night. He prescribes for the soul starving, scourging, night-watches, prostration of intellect, and a heart dumb to all the friendly intercourse and kind affections of nature. The perfection of Popish virtue was St. Simon standing for twenty years on the top of a pillar.

When Luther first visited Rome, he expressed himself shocked at the almost universal infidelity of the priesthood; and Blanco White mentions that their chief subject of confes-

sion in his time, among themselves, was their total unbelief in any futurity, for which they gave each other absolution ! The Pope is least liked where he is best known, at Rome, that Dead Sea of Popery, where the prayers in church of all classes are described as being heartless and indifferent beyond example.* There the beggar interrupts his muttered devotions to ask for alms, and the shop-keeper will rise for a minute from his knees, to offer the passing stranger his card of prices, and then drop down again, to his interrupted Ave Marias.

But who can wonder at any degree of contempt excited by a superstition which publicly holds up the Bambino, a wooden doll, to a degree of reverential adoration, which makes a Protestant weep for the degradation of human nature itself? When will there be in London such a scene as Mr. Seymour describes at Rome,† where the Bambino has set up its carriage—a grander equipage than that of the Lord Mayor, quite eclipsing those of the Pope or Cardinals? “Neither the image of the Virgin nor the consecrated Host itself, elicit the same degree of worship and prostration as the wooden Bambino at Rome.” Mr. Seymour says that he felt his blood freeze within him at the awful spectacle of a crowd that no man could number, worshipping that idol. In the midst were the more immediate officials, holding aloft their gigantic torches, and in the centre of these again were the priests surrounding the high priest, who held the little image, the wooden Bambino, in his hand. The doll is about two feet in length, not unlike, except in its attire, the dolls made for the amusement of children in England or France. At least one hundred torches, each in the hand of an ecclesiastic, glittered and flamed around. The monks stood in their places, the ecclesiastics gathered together, the incense was waved, and enwrapped all for a moment in its clouds and perfumes, the military band filled the whole place with a crash of music, and the soldiers of the guard presented arms, as the chief priest lifted the little image—slowly lifted the Bambino, raising it above his head. In an instant, as if the eternal Jehovah were visibly present in that image, among the vast multitude gazing from far beneath, every head was uncovered before it, every knee was bent to it, and almost every living soul was prostrate before it.”

* Rome : its Edifices and People, p. 203.

† P. 293.

Language seems to fail, when the author would desire to warn the young of her own sex against the very faintest tinge of Popery darkening the horizon of their lives. It may be but as a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, but soon earth and sky will grow black beneath its shadow. In her own early years the author had aged Christian friends, now low in the grave, who used to tell her that as the fulfilment of prophecy in respect to the Jews was one of the most striking evidences of Christianity, so she might with equal certainty expect that there would be about this time an extraordinary revival of Romanism in England. It seemed then to the author as if a miracle could scarcely prostrate the mind of English men and of English women to a belief in Papal infallibility, and to all the degrading consequences, moral and intellectual, which that belief involves. She has lived to see, in many mournful instances, her mistake,—she has lived to see, that perhaps her aged friends had interpreted prophecy aright,—and she has lived to fear that the warnings of far abler pens than her own will be given in vain. The desire for usefulness, which is the only hope that ever gave activity to her pen, has induced the author to attempt a representation of that pestilence walking in darkness, which seems about to overshadow the happy land of her birth; and it has been only after many days of hesitation, and many nights of intense anxiety, that she has at length resolved on bringing her opinions thus before the public, as a word in season to the young of her own sex. Many will tell her, and some have done so already, that such subjects are beyond the depth of a female pen; but as the chief danger threatens the feelings and opinions of girls, the author, remembering the days of her own happy girlhood, feels an irresistible desire, before following those who then warned and instructed herself, to do for others what was once so affectionately done for her. Many will censure the attempt,—many will call it presumptuous, and some old friends who differ from her will be displeased; but the author has in many an anxious hour counted the cost with sorrowful anticipation, and yet felt that the happiness she has experienced in a Protestant church is a debt that can be best acknowledged by recommending that greatest of all blessings to others with whom friendship, sympathy, or relationship may give her any influence.

When the present Pope took flight from his own subjects,

disguised in livery, to Gaeta, he owed his restoration to the Jesuits, to whom he has ever since remained entirely subjected ; therefore, the Romanism propagated in England now is entirely that of Jesuitism. It is a curious coincidence that, in London, the nearest public building to the Popish Cathedral is Bedlam ; and those who study the Jesuit doctrines will all allow, that there could scarcely be a more appropriate neighbourhood.

One of the most learned clergymen of the English Church, who died some years ago, left behind him, printed for private circulation, a pamphlet which he spent many years in arranging, and which the author hopes to see one day published for the public benefit. It consisted entirely of extracts from the writings of Jesuit authors, verified by a laborious reference to the pages and chapters in each book, and stating in what library at Paris or elsewhere the volumes could be found ; and the whole collection formed a complete revelation from their own words of their own doctrines and sentiments. Should any of the incidents in the following story be thought over-stated, the author hopes her young readers may one day have an opportunity to compare them with the pamphlet she has carefully studied, and should any lady obtain such an opportunity as she has had to ascertain the full extent of those new principles now progressing in England, she thinks they would require no stronger warning to

BEWARE OF ROMANISM.

BEATRICE.

CHAPTER I.

"One master grasps the whole domain ;
Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."
GOLDSMITH.

IN the year 1820 an excellent bridle-road led to within twenty miles of Clanmarina, a village on the west border of Inverness-shire. It consisted at this remote period of low ruinous mud huts, no better apparently than living tombs for their almost starving inhabitants. The little sea-shore hamlet, sheltered among naked-looking mountains and gigantic cliffs, appeared like a flock of sheep cowering beneath the hill side, and the spray as it dashed up in tall pyramids on the overhanging rocks seemed for a moment instinct with life and vivacity.

Each humble dwelling at Clanmarina, roofed with turf and floored with bare unhewn rock, exhibited a miserable equality of desolation ; and within the whole extent of that wretched village it would have been impossible, probably, to find a single article of luxury, a room pretending to ordinary comfort, or even one entire pane of glass throughout the long row of patched, broken, and slated windows which met the eye, some stuffed with an old blue flannel petticoat, and others with an old hat of the scarecrow species.

The very few travellers who during these by-gone days hurried though such a scene of indigence, might have looked in vain for a "rest and be thankful," as the only "public-house" in that forsaken neighbourhood carried a notice at the window, intimating the utmost extent of conveniences it afforded in this stately announcement,—“Bread and Peats sold here.”

"The little window, dim and drake,
Was hung with ivy, breere, and yewe ;
No shimmering sun here ever shone ;
No halesome breeze here ever blew."

The village was, indeed, as Lord Eaglescairn's French cook one

day contemptuously remarked, "Clanmarina au naturel," for in those dismal days there existed no Highland Destitution Fund to shed its beam of sympathy on the gaunt and fireless hearth-stones of the shivering natives. If therefore, now and then, the poorest inhabitants dined on sea-weed, or burned their own weather-stained furniture for fire-wood, nobody knew, and still fewer cared.

All had been so long at a stand-still in the annals of this parish that the neglected villagers grew old in the torpid indolence of helpless suffering, too intensely feeling bodily privation to feel anything else. They universally professed the usual Highland antipathy to fishing, they had no cottage allotments of garden-ground in which to dig, and though to beg they might not have been ashamed, yet amidst such uniform poverty there existed no hope of obtaining throughout their own neighbourhood more than merely "a penny from the starving man."

Any poetical imagination that pictures a scene of graceful poverty, should have witnessed the matter-of-fact wretchedness in those mud hovels at Clanmarina, where the natives were as ignorant as they were poor, for the charge of their immortal souls had been long consigned to shepherds who cared more for the wool than for the sheep. A Popish Priest, Father Eustace, who acted as confessor in the neighboring family of Lord Eaglescairn, sold indulgences when the Roman Catholics could afford to purchase any, and impoverished the poorest by his commanding extortions, while the Protestants had for their "minister" Dr. McTurk, "a moderate" in the most moderate sense of that expressive term. Though as perfectly solitary and unmarried as if he had himself been a Popish priest, Dr. McTurk had that natural craving for money which would have induced him to save for his cat, if he had no nearer relations, and his indolence became such that Sunday after Sunday he lazily read from the pulpit, in regular rotation, twelve successive sermons, in twelve successive weeks, with a *da capo* at the end. These manuscripts were now worn to rags, though the nearly obliterated sentences were mechanically stereotyped in his memory, and in the memory of the oldest inhabitants, some few of whom still straggled into their ancient church, feeling a due reverence for the venerable services, even though they had ceased to reverence the individual, who had once been the object of their enthusiastic choice, who still called himself their pastor, but who became visible to them only once every Sunday in his pulpit, wearing his hat upon his head for the first minute, and then carefully hanging that and his blue great-coat on a nail behind them.

Dr. McTurk's "principal heritor" was the Earl of Eaglescairn, a Roman Catholic peer, who boasted of his Highland property being so boundless, that instead of measuring it by acres he measured it by square miles, or rather by degrees of latitude and longitude. Proud, cold, and obstinate, his immense fortune seemed as naturally and irresponsibly his own as a leopard might consider the spots on his

skin, or a peacock the feathers on his tail. Lord Eaglescain habitually declared and positively believed, that all the misfortunes which befel any individual were "entirely his own fault." He did not apply to himself the old proverb, "Use every man as he deserves, and who shall escape the lash," but as a substitute for the sympathy which his friends might have anticipated in any unexpected affliction, as well as to justify his entire want of commiseration, he always carefully traced up the pedigree of a misfortune to some blameable cause, and then said with a self-satisfied air, "The man richly deserves it!"

In a somewhat similar spirit, when, occasionally venturing into the Highlands and gazing from the window of his magnificent carriage and four at the surrounding country, if Lord Eaglescain's eye condescended to rest for a moment on the humble village of Clanmarina, he always took the opportunity to express to Father Eustace his utter abhorrence and contempt for that idle unimprovable population. Their wretchedness certainly exhibited a perfect exaggeration of Irish misery, in its most priest-ridden districts, and from the same causes—an absentee proprietor and a resident Popish "Father!" Lord Eaglescain, considering all the small tenantry as his goods and chattels, to be disposed of at his own pleasure, and caring not a farthing about the condition of his kilted clan, or about the condition of any mortal but himself, consulted Father Eustace at last, whether it might not be desirable and very easy to eject those tenants in Clanmarina who occupied his share of the village. When looking at such tumble-down tenements disfiguring the landscape, it seemed to Lord Eaglescain perfectly laughable when Father Eustace asserted that these villagers were "attached to their homes!"

"Impossible! quite impossible!" replied Lord Eaglescain contemptuously; for his own home, abounding as it did in splendid luxury, had so failed to attach him, that he never spent one voluntary hour which could be avoided in Eaglescain Castle. "They are mere moles, burrowing in the earth, and like moles also in paying no rent."

Father Eustace listened with open-mouthed attention, though unavoidably feeling conscious that he reaped from the superstition of these credulous villagers a better rent than Lord Eaglescain did from their industry, as he had terrified them into paying their little all for an imaginary release from a shadowy purgatory. "It would be a strong measure to eject them," said Father Eustace in a voice almost smothered with respect, "and might require strong measures, which I could scarcely sanction or recommend."

"Then," replied Lord Eaglescain drily, "let us arrange that henceforth your whole income shall be derived from my rents in Clanmarina, that I may see how you will realize them."

"Excuse me, my Lord," replied Father Eustace demurely, "that would mix me up too much with the secular affairs of my people."

"Which you would richly deserve for saying a word in their favour; and they richly deserve whatever befalls them, for being the most good-for-nothing idlers in the kingdom."

Lord Eaglescairn did not consider what he himself "richly deserved" for making London his constant home, to the neglect of all those whose prosperity depended on the sunshine of such help and encouragement as it was his duty, and might have been his happiness, to afford them. There was nothing which the noble peer disliked more than philanthropic schemes and philanthropists, as he often said that the shortest way to relieve the poor would be, to let them dispose of their superfluous children *à la Chinoise*. His favourite seat was his recently attained seat in the House of Lords, where he sat playing the game of politics, for an object which he thought his whole existence well spent in attempting to achieve. The prize at which Lord Eaglescairn aimed was, to metamorphose his old coronet of an earldom into the new one of a marquise. He piqued himself on some blundering knowledge of foreign affairs, while in utter ignorance of his own; and had a sort of heavy eloquence, mouthing and sententious, with which he delayed the final division on many a question, of which he in no degree influenced the actual decision.

Lord Eaglescairn had long been a widower with but two sons. Like a true Scotchman, it was his conviction that whatever he bestowed on his younger son caused a diminution of that importance which it was his chief object to accumulate for his future representative in the world, Lord Iona. While the whole power of wealth and the whole ingenuity of man therefore were keenly exerted to polish and adorn the young heir of his ancient house into a diamond of the brightest lustre, the second son was treated as a poor dependant forced on his bounty, and continued to be known among his relations and friends merely as "Tom De Bathe, the pleasantest fellow upon earth, and the poorest," being merely a lieutenant in the 93d Highlanders, living on little more than his pay.

When that distinguished regiment was at length quartered at Gibraltar, the young De Bathe made himself the observed of all observers by his dashing good-humoured adventurous life. He was "flirter of all work" at every ball or picnic, and became unexpectedly the hero of a most romantic adventure at last, by running off from the very gates of the nunnery of St. Bridget with a beautiful Spanish girl, on the very evening when she was to have been forced to take the veil, and embarking with her on board a vessel as it left the harbour. Nothing in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances could have excelled the singular narrative of escapes, discoveries and disguises, which he wrote to Lord Eaglescairn, when announcing his marriage to the most beautiful and persecuted of her sex. In consequence of her wishing to become a Protestant, the young bride had undergone unheard-of hardships from her bigoted family,

in order to make her consent that while yet in the bloom of her youth she should become immured for life in a silent and solitary cell within the convent of St. Bridget, and it was to give her a pleasanter alternative that Tom De. Bathe hastily rushed into so dashing a scrape as a marriage upon nothing per annum, with a young girl who had made, he thought, a monopoly of every human perfection except fortune.

Lord Eaglescairn glanced over the history of his second son's romantic marriage, written in a style of clever goodhumoured audacity, with burning indignation and speechless contempt. A happy but penniless marriage could have no sympathy or encouragement from him, therefore the stern father ordered that the name of his son should never more be mentioned on any pretext in his presence: all his allowances were immediately stopped, and if letters came to Eaglescairn Castle directed to the Hon. T. De Bathe, they were all returned to the post-office, with a line in Lord Eaglescairn's own hand, saying, "Not known here."

Thus the young couple, Tom De Bathe and his Spanish bride, were at once consigned by both their families to oblivion, such as the living are sometimes more condemned to, by their relatives, than even the dead. Whatever the enamoured bridegroom might hereafter suffer was, as his father observed with a bitterly scornful smile, "his own fault," and was what he, poor in all other respects, richly deserved. He therefore emphatically called down a curse upon his own head, and that of Lord Iona, now his only acknowledged son, if either ever consented to see or to benefit the erring pair, or voluntarily to have intercourse with any of their belongings. Under such circumstances it became impossible for Tom De Bathe to meet any longer the expenses of his military career; therefore, having hurriedly sold his commission, he retreated with his high-born, penniless, and beautiful young wife, far from the excitements of garrison duty, from the annoyance of domestic tyranny, from the magnificent scorn of Lord Eaglescairn, and from the persecutions of Popish and Spanish relatives, into the cool depths of retirement, so retired that even his dearest friend in the regiment, Captain Evan McAlpine, a distinguished officer, who had been the means of converting both Tom De Bathe and his bride to enlightened Protestantism, vainly endeavoured year after year to find out the whereabouts of those who seemed to have relinquished at once every earthly friend and every earthly hope from friendship.

Half the village of Clanmarina belonged to the uncle of Captain McAlpine, a resident Highland proprietor, the chief of his clan, who piqued himself on being cousin to almost every family of distinction in the North, and on being the most Highland of Highlanders, knowing and caring for nothing beyond the bounds of his own territory. Sir Allan McAlpine, being rich, old, and childless, was, as the usual consequence of having great wealth and little use for it, a miser. He had a monied look not to be mistaken, so that his

very shadow should have been in bank notes, and Sir Allan was so greedily avaricious that his veins should have run with gold.

The only book Sir Allan ever studied was his banker's, being sure that the balance would be always in his own favour. He often jestingly declared that it broke his heart to break the back of a five-pound note; and certainly, as his two nephews experienced, the love of money cramped his very soul, as well as impoverished his whole existence.

Family pride had been nurtured by the Chief in himself as the most praiseworthy of virtues; nor was it a very expensive one, as his heir being merely a nephew, he could not be expected to do as liberally towards him as if, like Banquo's ghost, he could look forward to a long futurity of greatness for his own posterity. Having ascertained accurately therefore what was the very smallest income on which his two nephews could be maintained in an infantry regiment, he desired that this amount should be paid quarterly to each, and expected in return the strictest economy and the most boundless gratitude. Evan McAlpine soon distinguished himself wherever distinction could be gained; and though, as the botanist observed of the Duke of Wellington's laurels in India, the plant does not grow there, nevertheless Evan reaped a harvest of them at the siege of Kittoor, and wherever else they were hardest to be won, till at length no knight of the Round Table could have deserved them better or worn them more gracefully.

Sir Allan's brave and high-spirited young heir might have been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, he contrived afterwards at his country quarters in Ireland to make his little income go so far in doing good, by educating the soldiers' children, by encouraging industry among the peasantry, and by other deeds of active benevolence; while his brother Robert, on equally limited means, kept the best horses in the regiment, frequented the gayest houses in the hospitable neighbourhood, and danced with the best partners in every ball-room, at each of which there were among the lively fascinating Irish girls no fewer than half-a-dozen future Mrs. Robert McAlpines.

Sir Allan became of opinion with Lord Eaglescairn that there are not rods and foolscaps enough in the world for those who deserve them, when he one morning received a *ne plus ultra* of composition from his nephew in the form of a lengthy epistle, full of perfect felicity, and announcing his projected marriage to Miss Caroline Ambrose, the "loveliest of her sex." She was evidently, without exception, as without dispute, the most beautiful, accomplished, and every-way meritorious young lady who had ever been known to live near the country quarters of any regiment. The fortunate bridegroom described the very colour of her hair to his indignant uncle, who wished it had been grey. She had the best seat on horseback, the finest touch on the piano, and the most brilliant eyes in all Ireland. Her dancing was perfection, and such

was her devoted attachment to himself, that she had positively refused one by one each of his brother officers, even the colonel himself, in order to make him the happiest of men.

No answer was ever returned by the most unreasonable of uncles to this letter, and it is to be hoped that the young people thought silence gave consent, as not many days elapsed after this first announcement, certainly not a week, before Sir Allan angrily read in the *Inverness Journal* the marriage in high life of Captain Robert McAlpine to Miss Ambrose, on which auspicious occasion the six bridesmaids seemed to have been her six sisters. The ceremony was witnessed by five brothers, the clergyman who performed the rite was also her brother; he was "assisted by" her uncle, the Dean of Tipperary. No wonder then that the settlements took a short time to adjust, as the junior daughter of so numerous a colony must obviously have less than nothing, and Sir Allan, furiously crushing up the unoffending newspaper in his hand, declared to his only companion, Dr. McTurk, with a fierce smile, that Robert might melt down all the gold lace on his uniform to live upon before he ever saw another shilling from him. "Who ever imagined," exclaimed Sir Allan, almost livid with rage, "an alliance between the ancient house of McAlpine, the most highly descended in Scotland, and a Miss Ambrose! a girl with probably no more aristocracy to boast of than the figure-head of a steamboat?"

"Very true, Sir Allan," replied the doctor, one of those excellent persons who never presume to form an opinion of their own; and he added, deliberately stirring his toddy, "the young lady, I dare say, has a mere *sauve qui peut* ancestry."

"What does that imply, doctor?" exclaimed the irritable old Baronet in a frenzy, "what can you mean?"

"I have not a very distinct idea myself, Sir Allan," replied the doctor indifferently, sipping his toddy, "but during my visit to Lord Eaglescain's in London lately, it was indispensably necessary for high life to trim your conversation with French occasionally, so I picked up a few phrases and I bring them in headlong whenever it is practicable. Lord Eaglescain quite made a *vol au vent* of the conversation, and always came into the room with a sort of 'Comment-vous portez-vous' look, which I rather successfully copied."

"Well, doctor! every ridiculous freak is sure of board and lodging in your brain; so I wish you joy of a new one," replied the old Chief, bursting into a fit of triumphant laughter, which almost restored him to good humour. "As for Robert McAlpine, he must live out his days in some hole in the wall; but within the old towers of Cairngorum Castle, none that ever bore the name of Ambrose shall show their plebeian faces till my head is laid lower than it has ever been yet. You look as grave as a tombstone, doctor; but what would Robert the Second have said to one of his lineal descendants marrying an Ambrose? I ask you, doctor! What would he have said?"

"It is difficult now to conjecture," said the doctor, with a comfortable smile, and adjusting his wig; "his Majesty had so many descendants, that ——"

"But we McAlpines are from the eldest daughter," said Sir Allan, unanswerably, and with a dignified glance round the gallery of family portraits; "I shall yet live to revenge this affront to the old race of McAlpine. I am not their Chief for nothing! Evan has had a whole troop of horses shot under him, and is an heir to be proud of. Let him marry now, as he has so long wished, the sister of Lord Dorchester, his colonel. They could not marry for deficiency of means, and dutifully waited for my permission. They shall marry now, on a sufficient income, and cut out this chance-medley alliance to the Ambrose dynasty. In my will shall appear a clause, that my heir is to forfeit all the ready money I leave him, if he ever willingly admits an Ambrose within the walls of Cairngorum Castle."

Captain McAlpine gladly complied with his uncle's permission to marry Lady Cornelia O'Brien; but, unfortunately, the old chieftain's desire of excluding the Ambrose dynasty was frustrated by the successive deaths of several children, who inherited a delicate constitution from their accomplished mother. They were met on the threshold of life by attacks of whooping cough and measles, which most calamitously thinned the ranks of infantry in the nursery of Captain McAlpine's country quarters, and entirely devastated the wishes of Sir Allan for an heir in the family of his eldest, and, most deservedly, his favourite nephew. If the old Chief had any human sensibility at all, it was concentrated in a sentiment of attachment, and even of respect, for that very distinguished young officer, the bravest and most generous of subalterns; but his family pride and family affection did not amount to the purchasing his majority in the regiment, then about to fall vacant. Had all Sir Allan's gold been in California, or had it been turned into slates, he could never have missed it, in so far as the spending or enjoyment might have gone, nor would any mortal have been the worse, except once a-year—and only once—when a splendid paragraph adorned every Scottish newspaper, and occasionally wandered even into those of London, announcing that "Sir Allan McAlpine, with his usual munificence, had forwarded the sum of 5*l.* to be distributed among his poorer tenantry at Clanmarina, by their excellent and exemplary minister, the Rev. Donald McTurk."

Why Dr. McTurk had never yet received the usual testimonial of a watch and appendages, from his "grateful and attached congregation," or a gown and pulpit-bible from the ladies, it were hopeless to conjecture, though in the mind of one modest, meritorious individual, the unaccountable omission became a subject of ceaseless wonder. The worthy minister, in a diary which he kept for no eye but his own, recorded his thoughts on the subject in a manner to touch the hearts and consciences of survivors, when, as a matter of

course, it should hereafter be published. In his still more private, solitary cogitations, he thought himself precisely the sort of man who does, in this best of all possible worlds, generally receive a public panegyric dinner, followed by speeches and plate. Like everybody else in the creation, Dr. McTurk believed his own case to be one of peculiar hardship, in being shamefully under-rated by a misjudging world. "But," thought he, determined to be consoled, "true merit never is appreciated in our profession, until we depart, either by death or translation."

Death tested the merits of the old minister and of the old Chief about the same period, for in August 1829 they both drank their last tumbler of toddy together, and during September following an advertisement appeared in the newspapers, announcing the "Memoirs of Dr. McTurk," in seven volumes crown-octavo, collected from his private diary and confidential letters, with a portrait and autograph. From the account of his preaching it became evident that the greatest of orators might have been improved by hearing him, and the best of men got a lesson from his virtues. It was obvious, in short, that had Dr. McTurk lived for ever, he might have rivalled Blair or discovered the philosopher's stone. Memorandums of his death-bed sayings were taken down on the spot, by an inconsolable cousin, who, being summoned to the spot after an estrangement of thirty years, wrote a heart-rending letter of grief and admiration at the conclusion of the last volume, and who, having thus complied with every direction in the will, then deservedly succeeded to all the doctor's savings, amounting to about 9,000*l*.

Old Sir Allan McAlpine's unexpected death was of no more personal concern to the survivors around than if a hack cab had been suddenly called from the stand where it once occupied a place; but most magnificent were the melancholy festivities which took place at his funeral, while his tenants endeavoured to look as sober and heart-broken as circumstances required. The great old venerable gate swung open, the leopards rampant which surmounted the pillars, one headless, and the other with his paw broken off, appeared more suitably dismal than the clansmen flocking with excited looks to the long-forsaken castle, and the immeasurable line of gloomy fir-trees groaned in the blast, while bagpipes which had not been inflated for half a century played in doleful strains "The McAlpines' Lament." Lips which had not for years tasted whisky, were now regaled at Cairngorum Castle with brimming bumpers, and there were some old veterans among these poor, ignorant, neglected, half-starving clansmen at Clanmarina, who followed old Sir Allan's remains to their last home, not only with solemn features, black habiliments, and downcast eyes, but also with a feeling of secret self-reproach, that they did not grieve more in earnest for so great a man as "The Chief McAlpine!"

CHAPTER II.

"The wild-flowers spring amid the grass,
 And many a stone appears,
 Carved by affection's memory,
 Drenched with affection's tears."—L. E. L.

IN less than a week, Sir Allan, throughout all the wide domains in which he had, during half a century, reigned as master, was no more missed than an old moon, or a dead sparrow. "His name was never heard!"

Nearly every figure was changed now on the magic-lantern of life at Clanmarina. The eldest son of Lord Eaglescairn, at all times the most unbrotherly of brothers, being on a cruise on board his own yacht, the *Aurora*, in the Mediterranean, where he cared for nothing, apparently, but which way the wind blew, wrote a few hurried lines to his father one day, announcing that his brother Tom had died of a fever at Corunna; and he understood from good authority that "Mrs. Tom," as he called her, "the Spanish wife," had now retired inconsolable to the convent of St. Bridget, from which his brother's imprudent and short-lived marriage had been intended benevolence to rescue her.

Not many months after this intimation, the Marquis of Eaglescairn was thunderstruck at receiving a letter from the captain of his son's yacht, announcing that Lord Iona, the heir of his recently-acquired marquisate, had died of malaria-fever at Rome, after a few days' illness. If Lord Eaglescairn, when thus left sonless, felt or said that he "richly deserved it," his sufferings under the blow were not of long duration. Having overeaten himself, after being exhausted by a long Popish fast, Lord Eaglescairn suffered a fatal stroke of apoplexy next day; and soon after, two gorgeous hatchments on the family residence, in Grosvenor Square, announced the total extinction of that branch which he represented in the ancient tree of De Bathe. Lord Eaglescairn, in his last moments, had frantically called for his solicitor, and spoken in almost delirious accents of a letter from his son Tom, whom he adjured to write once more,—to tell him all, and not yet to despair of his pardon; but the servants, to whose care he was committed, paid no attention to what they considered the ravings of fever, till at length the scene of mental and bodily suffering closed in death.

Very distant indeed was the cousin who now emerged from obscurity to succeed to the ancient family of Eaglescairn. The new Peer had begun life as a rollicking barrister in London, celebrated for his eloquence and ready wit in the courts of law; but a brilliant speech of his, on a question connected with Church affairs, having failed to gain the cause he advocated, Mr. De Bathe became disgusted with

the world, and, in an impulse of pique at not being able to carry the Church his own way, he quarrelled with it altogether, suddenly associated himself with the Jesuits, and retired to one of their institutions near Bath. On the death of Lord Eaglescairn, he left Prior Park, to assume the high position which now so unexpectedly awaited him; and, as there is nothing people become so soon accustomed to as good fortune, the new lord soon felt as if he had never been otherwise than Lord Eaglescairn. The gossiping world continued to exclaim, with ceaseless wonder, at the extraordinary vicissitudes of fortune in the family of Eaglescairn long after the innkeepers had substituted the new peer's portrait for that of the old one over the alehouse door, and long after the new lord had ceased to wonder at all.

Accompanied by the Spanish Jesuit, Father Eustace, now his appointed confessor, by another priest "his director," and by a detachment of miscellaneous priests from Prior Park College, the new Earl of Eaglescairn proceeded to take immediate possession of Eaglescairn Castle. His Countess, very bigoted and unapproachably deaf, accompanied him there, as she had returned from abroad, to preside for life over the priestly establishment. Contrary to the Jesuit principles which he admired, the new peer had been tempted into marrying a beautiful but silly wife, who had gone abroad with their only son, now Lord Iona.

If the Papists be right in considering it a crime to marry, as well as to read the Bible, Lord Eaglescairn had done penance through life for having committed it, as the beauty of his bride soon vanished in his estimation, and her silliness seemed daily to increase, though it found an ample vent abroad, in attending all the gorgeous processions and image worship of Rome, to which, with her sister-in-law, Lady Stratharden, who believed herself still a Protestant, she became most ardently devoted.

At Clammarina a Popish chapel was immediately reared, large enough to contain much more than double the population of the entire hamlet; where the ignorant villagers were summoned, several times a-day, to hear Latin prayers inaudibly muttered, and where they learned only the bodily exercise which profiteth nothing, to wear scapulars round their necks, to kneel before a wooden image of St. Benedict, and to count their beads, amidst a perfect toy-shop of trifles and trinkets, relics and rosaries. No rational education, nor intellectual piety, accompanied the injunctions laid on these poor deluded peasants to buy expensive indulgences and perform laborious penances, both of which combined to keep them in hopeless degradation of mind, as well as in most thoroughly pillaged poverty.

Face to face, though several miles apart, the towers of Cairngorum Castle overlooked those of Eaglescairn; and two more noble residences could scarcely have rivalled each other throughout the Highlands. Opposed in both religion and politics, the two families had for centuries lived and died on terms of the very barest civility.

The new Chief of McAlpine, Sir Evan, when he left the 93d regiment, regretted and respected to the utmost pitch of human reverence by every officer and by every private in the corps, seemed more unlikely than any of his predecessors to amalgamate with a representative of the narrow-minded and bigoted old Earls of Eagles-cairn, who had evidently inherited all the gloomy superstition and austere ideas of his ancestors. Yet the chief made a proper distinction between families in which the Romanism was hereditary, like some old-established Papists around, and those, like Lord Eagles-cairn, in whom it had recently arisen, from vanity, love of power, and love of excitement.

Bright indeed should have been the bonfires, and warm the reception given to Sir Evan McAlpine, when he arrived to take possession of Cairngorum Castle, could his fortunate tenantry have conceived how eminently the excellent Chief, now about to reign among them, was both able and willing to render himself deservedly beloved in every rank. Since the almost fabulous times of the Red Chief and the Black Chief, whose frowning portraits adorned the walls of Cairngorum Castle, the clan McAlpine had been pre-eminent for their devoted attachment to the old family; and now, did not the echoing hills bear witness to the Highland enthusiasm with which his numerous tenantry welcomed their brave young soldier-chief, already so distinguished, to the halls of his ancestors? Happy Clanmarina! No language could have described, no heart anticipated, a tenth of the benefits now about to be showered upon his tenantry by Sir Evan,—true benefits, coming as they did from the best of heads, as well as from the best of hearts,—a heart glowing with long-cherished feelings of family attachment and of hereditary associations.

Sir Evan, having become recently a widower, was accompanied by his aunt, the sister of his mother, Lady Edith Tremorne, a "good old English gentlewoman," the almost jointureless widow of an excellent Devonshire clergyman. Her deep resignation, amidst many successive sorrows, had gained her the respect of all; and the courteous dignity of her manner was in unison with the elevated cast of her countenance, her silvery hair shading a pale, high forehead, and her widow's cap, which she never ceased to wear, harmonizing well with the subdued pensiveness of her clear, dark eyes, which spoke not of happiness, but of cheerful resignation. When, with his habitual consideration for others, Sir Evan, in a tone of friendly sympathy, invited the lonely widow to reside in his house, he said to her, in his kindest of tones, which sank into her grateful heart for life, "Remember, Lady Edith, whenever you say that you are going home, that now means that you are coming to Cairngorum Castle."

Sir Evan, having thus unexpectedly attained to a step without purchase, which his honoured uncle did not intend for him so soon, stepped into the unencumbered possession of a most extensive territory, as well as to the accumulated hoards of a parsimonious miser.

As his brother Robert's regiment was about this time under orders for India, the first act of Sir Evan was to purchase him promotion in the regiment; and also, remembering how often he and his brother had lamented the tightness in the money-market of their uncle, to request that the education and charge, in all respects, of his young nephew, might, during his brother's absence, be entrusted to his care.

Young Allan McAlpine, at half-past eight years old, had a countenance radiant with health and with the lustre of a joyous spirit; yet there was an evidence of latent sensibility, amounting almost to a painful extreme, in the expression of his deep blue eyes; while his clustering curls shaded a brow as open and intelligent as ever adorned the countenance of youth. His dress was picturesque, the style being chiefly borrowed from the Highland garb; and his figure, the very perfection of childish grace and even dignity, was tall and slightly formed.

In the new Chief's mind there had arisen a pleasing consciousness of his power to do good among his impoverished clansmen, and a fervent desire to do it well. Nothing excited him so pleasantly as to conquer difficulties; and that he might obtain the best assistance in his great objects, he frankly claimed the good offices of both the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane, the excellent presbyterian incumbent of the parish, and his truly pious, amiable wife; also, of Mr. Clinton, who officiated in that neighbourhood in the very smallest of episcopal chapels, to the very smallest imaginable congregation, on the very smallest of stipends. When Sir Evan, on his accession, more than doubled the well-bestowed income of Mr. Clinton, he married an amiable, intelligent young lady, who had long been engaged to share his poverty with him, as soon as they could muster a sufficiency to exist upon together; and the domestic happiness which ensued was best exemplified by the hand-in-hand diligence with which Mr. and Mrs. Clinton united in uprooting the tangled weeds of ignorance around their little parish, and in pursuing a succession of most beneficial plans for the general good.

Every Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Clinton invited some of the most virtuous and intelligent of their neighbours to spend the evening with her, and to take "tea-pot luck;" while Mr. Clinton, with his fine, solemn, benevolent voice, read aloud some instructive work, and the ladies occupied several hours in making clothes for the destitute poor; so that very soon the ragged school looked no longer ragged.

Mr. and Mrs. Clinton had, for several years, no family, but in the course of time, two fine, high-spirited little boys were born, who became, in after years, quite an ornament to the village, with their bright smiling eyes, their boyish laughter, and their active charity—for in every good work their parents allowed them, as the happiest of privileges, to share. Who does not feel the delight of being useful? and to children, from the very earliest age, the consciousness of becoming so brings a glow of warm-hearted happiness.

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Lady Edith enjoyed beyond measure attending Mrs. Clinton's tea-parties, which took place in summer amidst the hum of bees and the song of blackbirds beneath a splendid old walnut-tree in the garden; and though the manufacture of tartan kilts and petticoats was, at first, very savage work for her delicate English fingers, yet she had a heart and intellect to appreciate at its inestimable worth the opportunity of so much intellectual and moral improvement. Mrs. Clinton seemed at all times to be present everywhere, especially where she was most wanted; and no subject which could add to her husband's usefulness or happiness was above or below her attention. She carried broth to the poorest, and medicines to the sick; she taught needle-work to the girls; and read the Holy Scriptures to all who were desirous of hearing them, in their own dwellings; but it never occurred to her as being necessary to assume any peculiar dress or unlike uniform in which to do good. She desired only to be a Protestant sister of charity, attached to many a dear domestic duty which no Popish superstition had ever taught her to despise, and firmly believing with the Apostle that it is a false religion which consists in "abstaining from meats and forbidding to marry."

"Strange!" she said, one day after receiving directions from her husband respecting some parish duties,—“how very strange, that there can be a religion professing to be founded on the Bible, or rather a superstition, which would forbid such a union as ours; when both God and nature declare that it is not good for man to be alone. How on earth could you get on without me, Edward?”

"Not very well!" replied Mr. Clinton, smiling, and then more gravely adding in a tone of deep reflection, "It is remarkable that the only church professing to be Christian, which has forbidden God's ordinance of marriage, is the only one which propagates the blasphemous legend of the marriage of St. Catherine."

Among the younger guests who were welcomed to Mrs. Clinton's little tea-parties, one of the most useful and respected was Robert Carre, son of a small farmer on the hill-side, who came from his distant home with an elasticity of step and animation of countenance which enlivened all who saw him. This intelligent youth had early shown a singular genius for literature, and was peculiarly alive to the importance as well as to the delight of studying sacred subjects, to do which, without neglecting other duties, he often sat up half the night. Some of Robert Carre's school-boy verses had been truly beautiful, especially those addressed to the young village beauty, Bessie McDonald, "The White Rose of Clanmarina," as he called her, a niece of Sir Evan's old military servant, and one of the loveliest girls, scarcely out of her childhood, that the eye of a poet ever looked upon.

Lord Eaglescairn being about this time in want of a secretary, offered the situation to young Carre, of whom he had heard the very highest character, and proposed to give him 100*l.* a-year. He even

pressed the offer upon his acceptance, with the promise that his salary should be on a sliding scale, to rise from time to time as his services continued; but the proposition was most respectfully declined, on the score of that difference in religion which raised an insuperable obstacle to his entering any situation, however in other respects desirable. This reply, given with the most guarded civility, Lord Eaglescain never afterwards forgave.

From this time Robert Carre continued with cheerful industry, and as frank and honest a heart as ever beat, to assist his father in the cultivation of their little farm, which he spared no labour to improve. Not a flaw in the fences at Daisybank, nor a defect in the soil escaped his attention, and what had once been a most forlorn looking garden, became under his care at last a brilliant rainbow of flowers hemmed in by a hedge of hollyhocks, lilacs, and laburnums.

Many a bouquet which might have been envied at Almack's was carefully cut by young Carre as an offering to Bessie McDonald, who received the dewy roses and lilies with a blush and a smile that eclipsed them all. Robert also helped her to adorn the little window of her mother's cottage with a few gaudy geraniums, supplied her with poultry and pigeons, by the rearing of which she made some little profit, as well as gained much enjoyment, and he taught her to cultivate many of the more useful vegetables in her mother's little "yard." Thus industry supplied the place of Aladdin's lamp, and few young men ever were happier than Robert Carre, who occupied all his leisure as a Scripture reader among the poor.

Soldiers at a review often have a mock fight on the most friendly terms, but when a real enemy appears, they unite at once in contending for life and liberty. Thus there had been, during some years, a good-humoured emulation in active benevolence on the part of the excellent parish minister and his wife towards the Clintons, whom they naturally looked upon as interlopers, but "no wars on faith prevented works of love," and when Lord Eaglescain arrived in the neighbourhood, surrounded by a priestly conclave, zealous to extend their Popish influence throughout the parish of Clanmarina, the friendly toleration which had always subsisted between these two excellent families became riveted by the bond of a common interest, and a common fear on account of the souls under their charge.

In Sir Evan McAlpine these excellent and zealous ministers, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Macfarlane, found an auxiliary, in whose active earnest life religion was not a mere parenthesis on Sunday, taken up for a special day, and laid down for a careless week; but, like the salt taken with his food, it pervaded whatever he thought, did, or enjoyed. To Sir Evan's enlightened mind Christianity had ever been a religion of love, which supplied the only grand object of human life, while he derived his own individual happiness from the

mutual confidence, affection, and sympathy of those he esteemed, as well as from feelings of universal goodwill towards every living creature within the sphere of his influence.

It might have touched any heart with emotion,—it might have brought tears of approving pleasure into any eyes, to behold the picture of genuine felicity and of dignified benevolence which was presented, when, on a fine summer evening in July 1835, the Chief of McAlpine, who delighted in giving an agreeable outlet to the sympathy and affection of his clansmen and neighbours, celebrated, in the noble park at Cairngorum castle, the 13th birthday of his young nephew and presumptive heir, young Allan McAlpine. His education was now carried on at home, by Mr. Herbert, a most accomplished scholar, who had many years before been Oxford tutor to Sir Evan himself, and was now somewhat advanced in years, but happy in the singular success with which he cultivated the talents of his accomplished pupil.

None of his juvenile cotemporaries could excel young Allan at his birthday fête in the athletic Highland exercises of throwing the caber or putting the stone, while, with a face apparently made for laughter and frolic, he joined eagerly in all the national games, as enlivening a picture of healthful boyish festivity as ever adorned a birthday celebration. Indeed, if Art and Nature had laid their heads together, intending to excel themselves in producing a creature of almost faultless perfection, they could scarcely have done more than had been done for young Allan, even though descended from the proscribed "Ambrose dynasty."

Sir Evan, whose energy seemed to have no twilight, equipped, as was his daily habit, in the ancient costume of his clan, and accompanied by his graceful refined-looking aunt, Lady Edith Tremorne, presided at the tenants' dinner, which followed that day, where unlimited abundance of beef and of plum pudding, tankards of ale and barrels of beer at discretion, were served in the open air to a numerous company of delighted guests. When a toast was proposed by the oldest clansman present,—“The roof-tree of McAlpine, and our honoured Chief,” the very sky was rent with successive cheers, which might have been heard at Inverness, led on, cap in hand, by Allan, who seemed inspired from that day with a spirit of manly energy, produced by the fervour of his grateful affection to the best of uncles and the kindest of friends.

The Chief made a short speech of thanks to his friends, expressing his own deep conviction that the only earthly object worth living for, was the hope of usefulness, and its best earthly reward, the sight of such heartfelt attachment as had been testified towards himself by those whom it was his most fervent desire and constant prayer that he might really benefit. “To each of you I would say, as a clansman and a friend,” he added, looking around on his attentive audience, with a serious, fixed, and steadfast gaze, “Help yourself, and heaven will help you. Be not dependent on any man's

efforts, but use your own, remembering the good old saying, 'that time is to the wise man gold; but in the fool's hand it turns to slates.'"

CHAPTER III

"Methinks the phantoms of the dead appear;
But lo! emerging from the watery grave,
Again they float incumbent on the wave,
Again the dismal prospect opens round,
The wreck, the shore, the dying, and the drown'd."
FALCONER.

How truly did Archbishop Leighton remark, that the Christian has a supernatural delight in natural things. Among the many sources of pleasure for which Sir Evan endeavoured to inspire his nephew with a taste, was the enjoyment to be derived from the scenery of this noble world, and especially from the various aspects of the ocean. The evening of Allan's joyous birthday set in with the fiercest storm at sea that the oldest inhabitant could remember, and Lady Edith proposed, after their guests had dispersed, that the family party, Allan, Sir Evan, and herself, should proceed to the shore, accompanied by Mr. Herbert.

As they proceeded through the beautiful park, many an autumn leaf, gorgeous in tints of orange, crimson, and scarlet, whirled past or dropped at their feet before they reached the tall summit of the red cliffs which overhung the sea, rising abruptly more than two hundred feet above the tide. There the waves dashed upwards with an explosion like thunder, while the sad wailing sound of the hurricane caused a dismal duet with the hoarse murmur of the billows, and loudly contrasted with the cheerful voices of the four animated spectators, pleased with their walk, with each other, with the glittering sunset, and with all animated nature.

Sir Evan was pointing out how grandly the surf came dashing up the rocks and fell in curling surges beneath, while innumerable sea-gulls were fluttering around in the crimson light, chasing each other on the water, revelling in the foam and dipping themselves in the waves, merry as a party of school-girls on a holiday, when suddenly he paused with a start of evident astonishment and dismay, while it seemed at the moment as if a thunder-bolt in a summer's sky could scarcely have produced in the usually calm spirit of Sir Evan a greater sensation. Allan looked round in amazement, and saw that his uncle was rooted to the spot, with clasped hands and straining eyeballs gazing far out to sea, where a long rocky point which interrupted the view was encircled by a belt of roaring surf, and almost concealed by a huge canopy of massy clouds. There the whole ocean seemed rocking in convulsions, and the

howling wind sounded indeed sublime, when, bursting suddenly in view, and battling through the hurricane, where Allan had never seen any sail before, a tall vessel appeared, scudding rapidly before the storm, and in her apparently reckless course she seemed making towards Clanmarina Bay. The scene became terrifically sublime, as the noble ship, like a floating world, came bounding forward, as if amidst the hurried riot of the unfettered ocean she would shiver the steadfast cliff on which they stood.

"She is a foreign ship, and carries a foreign flag," said Sir Evan, in a voice of grave apprehension, to Mr. Herbert. "See how wildly her colours are streaming in the blast! She will be hurled on the crags!"

"They have evidently mistaken their course; yet if the captain carries a chart on board, that will point out the almost impossibility of entering this bay with a west wind. Every seaman avoids it!" replied Mr. Herbert, anxiously, while Sir Evan, with shuddering indecision, stood during one short moment endeavouring to think what he ought to do for the endangered vessel. It looked like an Alpine mountain rushing irresistibly forwards, buffeted by the roaring tempest, and springing over the gigantic waves.

"They will be lost! all on board must perish!" exclaimed Sir Evan, with increasing agitation. "No warning can reach them now, and no human power can save them. The sails are torn to ribbons—yet how she rends her way onwards! Come all, and follow me. We must do something. Let it not be our faults if they die! Aunt Edith, and Allan, go home instantly, ring the alarm-bell, light the largest fires you can kindle, prepare blankets, linen, hot water, and cordials. Leave the rest to Herbert and me; but hope the best, and pray for our success."

In an instant Sir Evan and Mr. Herbert were with dauntless heroism in full career down the precipitous sides of the cliff, hallooing to the fishermen below their hurried orders that the fishing-boats should be instantly unmoored. The sailors had been gazing inactively at the fated vessel; but how great is the power of an individual to arouse heroic feelings and generous thoughts by his own example! When Sir Evan sprang on board the first boat which was afloat, followed by his old military servant McRonald and Robert Carre, he asked in tones of eager animation if any of the clansmen would follow to the rescue, and scarcely had he spoken before he was surrounded by a sufficient crew of hardy, active, energetic seamen. The splash of the oars had already gladdened the brave Chieftain's ears, as they hurriedly pushed off from the shore, and Sir Evan himself was guiding the helm of one boat, followed by several others, when suddenly looking round, the Chief was startled to perceive that Allan, having followed unperceived down the cliff, had leaped into the boat, and was actually seated by his side. The spirited boy glanced at his uncle, his hair blowing wildly in this fiercest of hurricanes, his cheek burning with excitement,

and his eye glittering with eagerness, while he waved his hat, and in a tone of fearless delight exclaimed, "Up, guards, and at them!"

Not a moment was to be lost, for the ship had already struck with so terrific a shock that she seemed instantly going to pieces. Port after port fell in, and the wind roared through the rigging, while the vessel continued striking, staggering, and still plunging yet further on the sands, till at length the wild waves washed quite across her, precipitating two men from the helm. The blocks groaned, the cordage shook, and the masts almost immediately fell over with a frightful crash, which threw the ship completely on her side, and precipitated many on board into the surf.

Sir Evan was now near enough with his little fleet of boats to hear the voices of the unfortunate crew, now struggling in the very jaws of destruction, swearing and praying in a breath, while all was bewildering confusion around: shrieks for help, prayers to St. Elmo, cries of despair, the roar of the hurricane, the thunder of the waves, and the long sweep of the ocean, bellowing as it dashed up the gigantic rocks.

High above all such appalling sounds, calm, clear, and commanding, arose the deep-toned voice of Sir Evan, accustomed to authority and fearless of danger. He directed every movement with as perfect composure as if seated in his own house, while the boatmen, taking courage from the example of their chief, watched his looks with implicit confidence, and obeyed his orders almost before they could be spoken.

In such a scene of entrancing excitement Allan felt a sovereign contempt for all the little adventures of his school-boy life; but though animated with courageous energy, he was over-awed into a solemn silence by the tragical interest of this fearful hour; still his nerves were undaunted, though from time to time volumes of water came streaming over the bulwark where he sat. The noble boy forgot his own danger in anxiously watching some of the foreign crew, entangled in the rigging of their ship, while in momentary hazard of being swept away, and with the eager enthusiasm of sanguine boyhood, he shouted so that every one heard him and felt encouraged by his dauntless spirit, "Let us save them all—every one! Not a man shall perish! Clanalpine for ever!"

Sir Evan's stout-hearted followers looked grave and resolute, as men who knew that their lives were at stake, but feared not to hazard them, while, with almost supernatural strength and skill, they pulled their oars till the boat sprung through the gurgling waters, or swept down the sloping sides of the mountainous waves, which were now strewn with fragments of wreck, with broken spars, and with drowning men. Several of the boat's crew evidently quailed with apprehension as they glanced around, but Sir Evan said in his own low, deep, earnest voice—"If we are to die, let it be like men."

The doomed vessel still stood at bay, though the mainmast had

snapped as a reed, and come down with a crash like the wreck of nature itself. A wild shriek had echoed up to heaven from the crowded deck, but now all was still, while the terrified crew, dumb and motionless with fright, stood huddled together at the gangway, watching the progress of their deliverers. Higher and higher rose the surf, leaping up the sides of the foundering vessel in wreaths of foam, while every plank seemed rending asunder, when Sir Evan's little fleet drew up alongside of her more sheltered side, and he sprung up the bulwarks alone. By his orders the clansmen remained at their oars in mute and solemn obedience to receive his commands, while the crew, one by one, almost torpid with affright, were received into the highland boats.

It became gradually evident now to Sir Evan that this was a Spanish vessel which he had entered, as he overheard the Captain's exclamations, in his own native language, of dismay and horror, mingled with prayers of almost insane agony addressed to many a saint—name unknown. Sir Evan also perceived a carved wooden figure of St. Bridget floating amidst the wreck, but whether it had been an image to be worshipped, or the figure-head of the ship, he had not time to ascertain, as his boat was whirling fearfully in the eddy of the driving vessel, and looking down on the black waste of waters, it seemed, even to his brave spirit, as if in less than ten minutes every living soul must be in eternity.

The scene around might have sunk the stoutest heart—the wall of waters on either side, the cold rushing wind, and the quivering of the vessel; but Sir Evan, standing almost on the brink of destruction, never for an instant lost his presence of mind, though the little bark manned by his men was from time to time lifted like a bird on the wing, and then rushed down the steep abyss, leaving behind a track of glittering foam. It was only when Sir Evan believed every soul on board to be rescued that he again descended to his anxious crew, and rejoining the most attached clansmen who ever pulled an oar, and followed by the other boats, crowded with refugees, landed safely on the little rustic pier at Clanmarina, where already Lady Edith had lighted a blazing bonfire to welcome the shipwrecked mariners and their brave deliverers.

It was with rapturous delight, yet with feelings very deeply solemnized, that the friends of Sir Evan and Allan received them after so gallant an exploit and so wonderful an escape. Not only were Mr. and Mrs. Clinton and Dr. and Mrs. Macfarlane there, filled with warm-hearted enthusiasm, but even Lord Eaglescain and Father Eustace mingled their congratulations and rejoicings with the surrounding group, and showed a degree of heartfelt cordiality on the occasion which gratified Sir Evan, always ready to meet more than half-way every evidence of friendly intentions, and who was received, when he landed, with a cheer that might have been heard on the highest peak of Cairngorum.

Already among the breakers, covered with sheets of foam, were

scattered planks, masts, rigging, casks of wine, bales of silk, chests and boxes, all tossing about, the sport of that noble element over which the ruined ship had so lately ridden triumphant. In the last boat which reached the shore there was one female and a child. They seemed to have been the only passengers on board, and what rank in life the lady held was not very obvious at the moment, as she was clothed entirely in black, wearing what was either a conventual dress or the very deepest mourning, with a chain round her neck bearing a small miniature, which she grasped convulsively in her hand. She had very singular eyebrows, as they were intensely black and strongly marked, as if a band of black velvet passed across her forehead, and her whole countenance was livid as marble. The fright and cold had rendered her completely insensible, and every means was used in vain for the sufferer's restoration. Father Eustace, who had an observant eye that nothing could ever escape, now proposed that she should be taken in Lord Eaglescain's carriage to Eaglescain Castle, adding, that he proposed this for a reason which no one present could endeavour to dispute,—that she was probably of his own persuasion, and it naturally became his province, therefore, to afford her, if she recovered, his spiritual advice and consolations. The little girl, a beautiful child of about ten years old, had already fallen asleep in the arms of Lady Edith, who, with the assistance of McRonal, the butler, conveyed her to a warm bed in the lodge, only a few paces distant from the pier, where she was left undisturbed and almost forgotten in the hurry and confusion of providing food and lodging for so many unexpected guests in the village and castle.

When Lady Edith some hours afterwards revisited the sleeping quarters of her little stranger-guest, she became astonished at the child's singular beauty. Large masses of long dark ringlets lay streaming over the pillow, and rippling over the small white, well-turned shoulders; and the little girl's long, dark eye-lashes—the longest and darkest she had ever seen—contrasted singularly with the dazzling skin, transparent as alabaster, and tinged on the cheek with a delicate pink, which gave a hue of brilliancy to her lovely complexion more of the English than of the Spanish character. The young sleeper, when she awoke, was so feverish and nervous from the shock and chill of the previous night, that Mr. Clinton, in his capacity of doctor, recommended that for several days she should remain in bed at Cairngorum Castle, where she had been already conveyed, and be kept perfectly quiet, as the slightest agitation would evidently be attended with danger. When Lady Edith proceeded to Eaglescain Castle, next morning, that she might convey this intelligence to the party there, she was struck with a singular degree of excitement manifest in the countenance of Lord Eaglescain, while even the usually passive features of Father Eustace betrayed more expression than they were usually allowed to wear, when he approached Lady Edith, who requested to see the

rescued lady, that she might tell her some particulars of the child's indisposition. Father Eustace replied that his own patient was also very ill, much more seriously so than the child, being even violently delirious; and that therefore it was impossible for any one to speak to the suffering stranger, or even to see her, except Lady Eaglescain and himself; but he undertook, as soon as she was able for any conversation, to tell her every particular that might be communicated to him about the child. Lady Edith, as she took leave, felt a vague consciousness that there was something not told her on this occasion, as Father Eustace and Lord Eaglescain were each evidently apprehensive when the other spoke, lest he should say what it seemed evident was not to be said; yet no conjecture could enable her to imagine a secret already connected with two strangers, respecting whom it seemed impossible that any one could yet have obtained the merest snatch of information.

The child's linen was marked in Spanish with the name of Beatrice Farinelli, and the whole dress in which she had been rescued was made of the very finest materials; but little else belonging to her was ever saved from the hungry waves. Billow after billow tossed the fated vessel like a weed on the ocean, for some stormy hours, till at length it gave one more fearful lurch, and pitched headlong to the bottom. The captain, in witnessing this final catastrophe, gave way to a paroxysm of the wildest despair; and from the little which Sir Evan could understand of his impassioned exclamations, mingled with every evidence of anger and grief, it seemed as if the ship had been actually bound on some special mission, for which he was to have been most liberally paid, to bring the lady and child who were on board to this very neighbourhood. His papers were all gone to the bottom, with the important orders which he had received on the subject; but he seemed positive that the bay in which his ship had foundered was the very bay of which he had been in search, for all his directions had been most accurately given in the missing chart, with letters, he said, to several families in the neighbourhood. This account was partly confirmed by the singular fact, that little Beatrice spoke English perfectly, though with a slightly foreign accent, which added much to the interest of what she said; but her whole knowledge of life seemed limited to the walls of a convent, where a Sister Agnes or a Sister Theresa were the only friends of whom she had any recollection.

Sir Evan proceeded next day to Eaglescain Castle, when he stated to Lord Eaglescain and Father Eustace all that the Spanish captain had said; but they both expressed an opinion that the captain wished to found a claim to some compensation upon so improbable a statement, and that from the Chief's imperfect mode of understanding his language, there must be some mistake. But Lord Eaglescain proposed to subscribe a sum for restoring the shipwrecked mariners immediately to their home, the munificence

of which astonished Sir Evan, coming from one by whom the verb "to give" had never before seemed fully understood.

When Sir Evan proceeded to inquire of Lord Eaglescain for his lady-guest, Father Eustace hurriedly informed him, with a look of deep concern, that her mind continued still in a very wandering state, and that during a short interval of consciousness she had refused to answer any of Lady Eaglescain's inquiries, but made a sign for him to approach, saying that she had taken a vow of silence for several years, and would speak to no one but a confessor. "Therefore," added Father Eustace, with his eyes on the ground, and his usual sublime repose of manner, "if you have any communication to make, let it be done through me."

Sir Evan had an instinctive penetration that seldom deceived him, and he felt a secret dissatisfaction, quite unaccountable to himself, at his whole interview with Lord Eaglescain and Father Eustace. There was the evident restraint of something on their minds that could not be told, and an ill-concealed impatience to send off the captain and crew, which occurred to him afterwards as very singular; yet, since nothing more seemed likely to be elicited from them, or possible to be discovered, the Chief took immediate measures for shipping off the homeless strangers at the nearest port, all the arrangements for which he made in about ten days, with the liberality and sympathising kindness invariably a part of his nature.

The Spanish captain and crew were to depart for Glasgow in a fishing-vessel, which had been engaged to lay off Clanmarina Bay in passing, to pick them up, and Sir Evan, having provided in every way for their comfort and safety, accompanied these foreign wanderers to the pier. When they were about to push off, and the Chief with his followers waved their caps as a last farewell, the Spanish captain, who was smoking his pipe, and at the same time counting his beads, but who had seemed all day evidently in a state of extreme agitation, suddenly started up, threw down the rosary and tobacco, sprung back upon the shore, and grasping Sir Evan almost convulsively by the arm, said in low trembling accents—

"You saved my life, and I am treating you like a villain! The Pope himself could not by his absolution make my conscience easy in doing so, nor all the Father Eustaces in Christendom. Here is an amber rosary and a golden crucifix belonging to that child, which I secreted during the wreck; and let me confess besides, that those letters you enjoined me to deliver at Corunna never can reach their destination. When I went to confession last night at Eaglescain Abbey, Father Eustace laid his injunction on me to destroy them before he would give me absolution. I was rascal enough to do so in his presence. There is some mystery about that child evidently, therefore never entrust her, if you can avoid it, to Father Eustace, for his object is to take her from your care, and it is in this neighbourhood I am certain that her friends were to have been found, though I think she has found some enemies too."

The Spaniard hastened to resume his seat on board the departing boat, and Sir Evan walked musingly back to his own fireside, where he communicated to Lady Edith and Mr. Herbert the singular acknowledgment made to him so unexpectedly, and which filled the whole party with amazement and with indignation, as well as with new interest in the child's future destination. Lady Edith had already become deeply interested in the lovely intelligent little Beatrice, but though educated in some convent to the highest pitch of refinement in every graceful accomplishment, and even in many literary acquirements, she seemed almost incredibly uninformed when Lady Edith penetrated into the depths of her ignorance and discovered the utter prostration of the girl's fine young intellect. She was in midnight darkness as to every person, place, or thing beyond the walls of her convent. In respect to religion her whole faith seemed to be wasted on legends of saints, no better than fairy tales, and on imaginary miracles, performed by lifeless images, of which a modern conjurer would have been ashamed.

"Let us hope," said Lady Edith with benevolent ardour, "that the little Beatrice having been shipwrecked on our shores, we may be enabled to save her from a far worse shipwreck of the soul."

"Yes," answered Sir Evan earnestly, "for never did I see the hideous superstition of her countrymen more degradingly testified than yesterday, when some of the terrified sailors were beating an image of St. Veronica, as large as life, in revenge for their losses, and others were frantically praying to it, bruised and battered as it was by so long drifting among the rocks."

"Little Beatrice has evidently never heard of a Bible," said Lady Edith, "and yesterday Allan found the poor child on her bare knees, in the marble hall, rapidly counting over her beads before the stucco busts of Archbishop Leighton and Dr. Chalmers!"

"As Bishop Warburton says, 'The gods, temples, and ceremonies of pagan times were adapted by papists to Christianity,'" observed Mr. Herbert.—"The bronze statue of Jupiter became St. Peter, and Juno has transmitted her peacock feathers to the state insignia of the Pope. It remained for more modern days to discover that St. Peter's chair was a convert from Mahometanism."

"Jupiter's bronze statue," said Sir Evan, "has the great toe literally worn away by the pilgrims daily kissing it in memory of the Apostle Peter. I remember seeing beggars come indiscriminately with thieves, monks, and ladies, who all carefully wiped the remains of the toe, the ladies using their embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, before taking their turn to salute this transformed Jupiter. His foot reminded me of the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, before which the captive Israelites were commanded to bend the knee."

"Nothing can be more splendid than the statue of Juno at Rome, now adorned to represent the Virgin Mary," said Mr. Herbert. "She wears diamonds that an empress could not match, but her votaries have committed an absurd anachronism by putting on their

dol a pair of ear-rings, being ornaments of very modern invention. That is quite on a par with the bad taste of putting jewels at all upon one whose vocation on earth was to set us an example of humility and every other private virtue in humble life."

"The celebrated image of the Virgin which I saw at Saragossa, supposed to perform miracles, is a little black doll dressed in scarlet satin and gold," said Sir Evan; "and there are rival dolls in every city of Spain, where the most angry jealousy burns fiercely between the inhabitants respecting the superiority of their favourite image. When I was last in Spain a young lady of large fortune had been worked up to such a pitch of delirious excitement that she allowed her two brothers to put her to death, by crucifying her on the door of their sitting-room, after which they succeeded to her income."

There are sometimes conversations heard once in our lives by an apparent accident, which remain engraved on our memory, and make us think for ever, especially when for the first time they call up reflection to an unaccustomed mind. Beatrice was seated on a stool at the feet of Lady Edith while these remarks were made, some of which she partially understood, and they long afterwards haunted her recollection. She had in her arms a large doll, given her that day by Lady Edith, who had purchased it at a charity bazaar in Cromarty. Whenever she looked at it afterwards, and pulled the wire to open or shut the eyes, she became reminded of so much as she had understood of what passed, and pursued the subject in subsequent years to its very centre, under the tuition of those into whose affectionate care she had fortunately fallen. Sir Evan and Lady Edith having resolved to be her friends, and even more than friends, instructed Beatrice by degrees during the long lapse of years in the profoundest depths of theology, being conscious that if ever reclaimed by her Spanish relatives it would be no superficial knowledge that could enable her to withstand the wiles by which she would be immediately beset.

CHAPTER IV.

"Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of heaven
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition; and the *truth*
With superstition and tradition's taint,
Left only in these written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places, and titles, and with these to join
Secular power: though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers."

MILTON.

THE next day after this conversation, Sir Evan sent a friendly note to Lord Eaglescairn, announcing that more than a week having

now elapsed, he meant to call at the castle next day at four o'clock, with Lady Edith, when he trusted that no impediment would be permitted to interfere with their seeing the Spanish lady who had been recently delivered from shipwreck, as he felt entitled to an interview, and was resolved to obtain one even though she might choose to observe her vow by remaining both deaf and dumb during their whole visit.

"How very strange," said Sir Evan to Mr. Herbert when folding up his letter, "are these Popish vows to abstain from the common functions of nature, sleep, food, or speech! Suppose I could make a vow only to inhale my breath six times in a minute instead of sixty, how usefully my attention would be occupied in the painful effort to check the inclination to breathe, which is, in fact, a very innocent indulgence."

"Two-thirds of the insane patients in a mad-house chiefly show their derangement by an intention of starving themselves to death; most of them are sleepless, and many are voluntarily dumb," replied Mr. Herbert. "I think those well-meaning persons who so closely imitate the effects of derangement reduce the vigour of mind and body, till they become more liable to those strange delusions, which cause Papists to 'see visions and dream dreams.'"

"There is quite a new code of sins in the Popish world," observed Sir Evan, sealing his letter; "the sin of reading the Bible, of eating, of sleeping, of speaking, of marrying, of having one's own opinion, or of looking each other in the face, and their code of virtue is to make unnecessary vows against those very necessities of life which God has appointed as the means of our existence and of our improvement. Suppose the birds were suddenly to think it wrong to sing, would they fulfil the purposes of their creation better by leaving off?"

The carriage which was to convey Sir Evan to Eaglescain Castle stood already at the door next morning, and Lady Edith had taken her seat, when to their astonishment Father Eustace appeared in the approach and advanced to meet the Chief, with a look of resolute calmness, evidently assumed with great effort, for his handsome dark face was lividly pale, and his firmly-clenched mouth bore an expression of reckless determination.

"I am come," he said, endeavouring to speak in a careless conversational tone, "to save you a useless drive. Madame Farinelli, our foreign guest, has taken, contrary to my advice, a very decided step by retiring for some weeks of solitude and penance to the convent of St. Columba, at Inverness, where she wishes to collect her mind and thoughts, after the terrors of shipwreck and the delirium which so calamitously followed. She desires me to convey her thanks to you for her wonderful deliverance, an obligation which she can never possibly either forget or repay; and I am also empowered to relieve you from the charge of her little girl, who is to join Madame Farinelli at Inverness."

Sir Evan fixed his firm intelligent eye with penetrating examina

tion on the handsome countenance of Father Eustace, which looked immovable as a mask, when the Chief replied in accents of stern reproof and of contemptuous indignation :

"You are deceiving me, and I know it, Father Eustace. It may perhaps hurt your conscience to be found out, and it has most deeply shocked me that you are. The Spanish Captain has revealed that letters of mine which were entrusted to him were, at your instigation, destroyed. Lord Eaglescain cannot surely be cognisant of this crime? I do not allow myself to suspect that possible; therefore to him I shall immediately communicate the very painful discovery of so much guilt on your part, the inducement to which seems totally inconceivable. This attempt to intercept my communications must prove utterly unavailing, as I shall send duplicates of my letters by the sure vehicle of the post immediately."

Father Eustace assumed the aspect of a man meekly suffering under a false accusation, raised his eye-brows, dropped his eye-lids, bent his head, and remained for several minutes perfectly silent; but as Sir Evan resolutely waited for an answer, he said, "I had a bad opinion of that ship-wrecked captain from the first, and this lying invention of his confirms it. He has stolen a sum of money from Lord Eaglescain, but he cannot steal from me my reputation for honour and integrity with any but heretics. I leave you to form what opinion of my faith and conduct suits you best, Sir Evan, and I shall only remain here to receive the girl who is committed by her mother to my care."

"That remains to be seen," replied Sir Evan, gazing at Father Eustace with most disconcerting earnestness. "Till I have a personal interview with the strange lady, and hear from her own lips what are her wishes in respect to the little Beatrice, she shall remain under my guardianship."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Father Eustace, with not the most amiable expression a face could display; "you surely cannot intend to dispute a mother's prerogative when she sends for her own child?"

"Not if it is proved that the little girl is hers, and that these are her own unbiassed wishes. This can only be ascertained by my personally seeing the lady with whom you so unaccountably refuse me an interview. Beatrice Farinelli shall remain under the charge of Lady Edith, and under my roof, till I see and speak to any one who professes to have a superior right. Her destination was to this neighbourhood, therefore we cannot doubt that letters will follow her from Corunna, to intimate where her home ought to be, if you are still unable to gather these particulars from the lady herself. By some means or other I shall see the shipwrecked stranger, even though legal means should become necessary to obtain the interview which you so unwarrantably deny me."

Father Eustace looked very grand and injured as he turned away, but seeing with very uncomfortable distinctness that Sir Evan desired

to hold no further communication with him, and had no idea of yielding another thought to his decision that the child should remain at Cairngorum Castle till a legal guardian appeared, and personally proved a right to claim her, the disappointed and apparently indignant priest, with a look at Sir Evan as if considering how he could most speedily annihilate him, slowly departed.

The laws of England, which give liberty to every individual in Britain, do not yet throw the light of freedom within the walls of any Popish convent, and no effort that Sir Evan could ever afterwards make, enabled him to see the Spanish stranger. He even went to make inquiries at Inverness in person, and was told by the Abbess at the Convent of St. Columba, in her most smiling and fascinating tones, that the Spanish stranger wished to see no one, and on a second visit, that she had suddenly found an unexpected opportunity to return home, and that she had gone, intending to send, as soon as she arrived in Spain, a trusty messenger for the young Beatrice. No such messenger ever came, and when Sir Evan more than once endeavoured to extract some information from Father Eustace, he might as well have spoken to an iceberg, unless he would consent to deliver the little foundling up to Father Eustace's custody.

The rolling years of time passed away without further notice being ever taken by any one, beyond the family circle of Sir Evan, that such a child existed on the earth as Beatrice Farinelli; and nothing that the Chief could say to Lord Eaglescairn on that subject made the slightest impression on him in reference to the strange conduct of Father Eustace, whom he considered now as a solemn impostor, and who passed him when they accidentally met in future with the vacant stare of an absent, self-absorbed stranger.

Sir Evan, feeling a judicious dread of too precocious an intellect, had the greatest difficulty in preventing his young nephew Allan from becoming a juvenile prodigy, under the tuition of his English preceptor, Mr. Herbert, whose accurate scholarship and enlightened piety rendered him the most delightful of inmates at Cairngorum Castle, and enabled him advantageously to assist Mr. Clinton in all his clerical duties; but he was prevailed on about this time to accept the Bishopric of Inverness, and when the time of his departure came the Chief resolved that his nephew's well-stored mind should be allowed for a few months to lie fallow.

So great was the grief of many among the poor at Clanmarina for the departure of the new Bishop, that Sir Evan smilingly said to him, "How truly did Luther observe that every man is born with a Pope in his heart! Such is the almost idolatrous attachment felt by even the best Christians towards those clergymen who teach them well, that each minister would soon become a miniature Pope. I believe, Herbert, it really is time for you to leave us, that all in this house may look beyond mere human help."

From this time Lady Edith became Allan's favourite companion

and confidante, after his excellent tutor had been so unexpectedly appointed Bishop of Inverness, and she instructed the spirited boy while she amused him, having obtained an influence over his mind, through the medium of his affection, almost unbounded; and now the attachment of Beatrice became every successive year more enthusiastic. With characteristic energy, Lady Edith, considering her present life as the first stage of an immortal mind in its progress to eternity, had at once assumed the entire duty of educating the young stranger herself; and a most apt, as well as a most interesting pupil she had found. The two beautiful intelligent young people, loving and being beloved by all around, were a source of the greatest and best happiness to Lady Edith, who seemed to have a sort of magnetic influence over their feelings, by the successful endeavour she constantly made to attach them to herself, and by the benefits she conferred while enlightening their understandings and improving their hearts.

The effect of Lady Edith's judicious training became obvious, not only by the mental energy she encouraged in Allan, but also by the gentle sensibility she cherished in Beatrice, now the very prettiest creature and most joyful phantom to be seen on the earth. The fair young girl, with the rich bloom of a southern clime on her cheek, could be compared only to a sunbeam, flitting gaily in her girlish beauty through the grim old towers of Cairngorum Castle, or flying with fairy footsteps, free as mountain air, over the heather-clad hills. She was accompanied, or rather pursued on these excursions, by her high-spirited and frolicsome companion, Allan, with his bright glowing countenance, his mutinous laugh, and waving brown hair, in all the blooming animation of happy thoughtless boyhood.

Beatrice Farinelli at fifteen was thoroughly taught by Lady Edith all the graceful decorations, as well as the essential principles of education. Not merely were her fingers and her feet well instructed, but her heart and intellect were moreover affectionately trained for the duties of this world, as well as for the hopes of a better. With the tenderest affection, Lady Edith from day to day enticed the blooming young girl to her lessons, and increasing year by year her efforts, taught Beatrice by an extensive, liberal, and generous education, how to master every subject of intelligent inquiry, as well as to mingle in society agreeably, to converse with intelligent frankness, and to exercise every faculty for the ultimate improvement of her heart.

One morning Lady Edith, on returning from her usual round of visits among some poor people sick of a fever, among whom it seemed neither safe nor desirable that Beatrice should be introduced, was surprised that she entered the house without the lively girl having run out as usual to welcome her, and she became still more astonished, neither to find her, according to custom at that hour, cultivating her flowers, nor rehearsing her music. Hours had passed

since Lady Edith went out, and the servants during that time believed that Beatrice had accompanied her; but now every search was made in vain, and the agitation of the whole household became extreme. Never was a child more beloved, and her absence, which would have been at any time unaccountable, began to cause the most alarming apprehensions. Sir Evan, who had dispatched his emissaries in every possible direction, himself set out towards Eaglescairn Castle, with a secret misgiving that Beatrice might have been enticed there by Father Eustace, of whose sinister desire to have her in his power the Chief could not entertain a doubt, however perplexed he felt to assign any motive for wishing to gain possession of so friendless an orphan.

Lady Edith had met Sir Evan near the lodge, and they were hastily proceeding together, when suddenly the old soldier who had long been Sir Evan's regimental servant, McRonald, appeared as rapidly approaching as his stately military step could allow. His bronzed face, covered with a skin like parchment, became lighted up, as it had often been on leading a forlorn hope, when he approached cap in hand, saying, "Sir Evan, if you please, Sir, the young lady is safe."

"How! where?" exclaimed Lady Edith eagerly, and at this moment Beatrice flew along the path, and with a cry of joy rushed into her arms, and clung vehemently to her, as if still under the influence of some recent fright. Her whole frame trembled, and her cheeks were flushed as scarlet, while every now and then she once more clasped her arms round Lady Edith, giving her the rough eager kiss of an agitated and affectionate child. The young girl, interrupted by sobs and tears, related that a lady, wearing a thick veil, had entered the garden that morning, and asked if she could point out the shortest way to Eaglescairn Castle, which she consented to do. On emerging at the garden door, from whence she intended to point out the path, a gentleman habited like a priest joined the lady, and they both united in requesting her to accompany them a short way, as they had something of consequence to tell her. After thus enticing her a mile or two on, the gentleman proposed that she should leave her present home with the lady who accompanied him, and who would take her at once to relations all anxious for her restoration to them. Beatrice said he spoke so eagerly that she found it impossible to get away, and she had been unwillingly led on till they reached a carriage. This she refused to enter, but she scarcely knew how to escape, when fortunately McRonald appearing in his market cart, she claimed his protection, and even then had some difficulty in getting away. The strangers at last, however, found themselves obliged to yield her up, and hurrying into the carriage drove off.

For many subsequent years no more was heard of any one again making an attempt on the liberty of Beatrice.

Meanwhile a spirit of true gentleman-like and Christian hospi-

tality was exercised by the Chief of Clanalpine towards the many distinguished guests from England and elsewhere, who crowded northwards every autumn to enjoy the sporting excitements of a gay Highland home; and while the Chief delighted in the society of his relations, friends, and old brother-officers, he maintained an enlightened and cordial interest in general society, as well as in the study of nature, science, literature, politics, and current events, on all of which sources of thought he taught his young nephew also to keep an eye of intelligent curiosity.

Wherever or whenever Father Eustace and Sir Evan met in after years, it appeared as if they had never met before, did not care to meet then, and never wished to meet hereafter; but with respect to young Allan and Beatrice, the conduct of the Jesuit was very different, especially after the departure of Mr. Herbert to his episcopal seat at Inverness left the young man for a short time tutorless, and therefore, when not, as was generally the case, with his uncle, occasionally alone. Whenever they met by accident,—and that accident accidentally happened very often,—Father Eustace in passing spoke a few words of courteous kindness to the young sportsman. If Allan were fishing, he had a fly of peculiar construction, the only one suited to that stream, which he taught the boy how to manufacture; he introduced him to the best pools, generally within Lord Eaglescairn's boundary; and pointed out one day to Beatrice where the loveliest wild flowers abounded there, and how to draw them with all their gay tints remaining perfect. He lingered often with the young heir of Clanalpine, when he happened to be alone, and brought out all the vast resources of his wonderfully trained intellect, of his wide and various erudition, to interest and amuse him; he roused his curiosity with respect to books of which the boy had never even heard, and at a time when Sir Evan was necessarily absent for some weeks, having gone to select a tutor for his nephew at Oxford, to prepare him for that University, Father Eustace brought these books to the river side, and thus happening, by mere accident, to have them in his pocket, read passages aloud for Allan of the most exciting interest, which made the young angler at last almost forget to land the trout when he had hooked it; but the angler of a different object never for a moment forgot his game. When Sir Evan returned home, and Allan frankly mentioned these interviews, the Chief, with a burst of uncontrollable contempt, interdicted the continuance of such clandestine assiduities on the part of Father Eustace, and secretly congratulated himself in having ended this guerilla warfare of stratagem, by securing for Allan the most Protestant of Protestant tutors, recommended by several Protestant families of distinction, and by more than one Protestant clergyman at Oxford.

Never was there such a piece of still life in any house as this learned treasure, the Rev. Mr. Talbot, a perfect dungeon of knowledge if he had anything in him at all. He seemed neither to see,

to hear, to eat, nor to speak, but made his appearance in society a self-contained man, with no evidence of interest in anything or in any one, except in his pupil, and in Beatrice, to whom he obligingly volunteered some instruction in history.

Mr. Talbot now occupied Allan's time so incessantly, that it became almost impossible to obtain a word of uninterrupted intercourse with the young student. Mr. Talbot, with perfect politeness, made it evident that he would not be interfered with in his prerogative of monopolizing Allan's whole time and attention, even to the exclusion of his nearest relations, and by his dark still glance, evidently ruled his pupil's very thoughts. It became an evident infringement of a right if any one spoke for above a minute to Allan, who seemed under a spell, as if drawn by some invisible chain to be always close beside his tutor, while Mr. Talbot watched him with an eye that seemed never to slumber. Once a day only his tutor became absent from home, and that was at the very earliest peep of the morning light, long previous to the hour at which Allan was accustomed to rise; and before he was thoroughly awake every day, he heard Mr. Talbot's door gently opened, and his step going stealthily down-stairs; but during some time he felt only the most profound pity for any man leaving his bed at so uncouth an hour.

One morning, however, when the weather had become insufferably cold, and the howling wind sent the rain in torrents on his window, it did fill Allan with wonder that any one could persuade himself on any terms to go out, and feeling a momentary curiosity to learn if Mr. Talbot really had faced the blast, he hurried to the window and saw him buffeting along through wind and rain towards Eaglescairn Castle. Allan then proceeded to clean his gun, arrange his flies, and perform other boyish evolutions, which occupied nearly two hours, at the end of which period he happened to look up, and with surprise perceived Mr. Talbot again at some distance, taking a hurried and very cordial leave of Father Eustace, who was evidently anxious to avoid being seen.

The unsuspecting Sir Evan confided implicitly in the intrinsic excellence of his inaccessible inmate, Mr. Talbot, and only regretted that so great a scholar, and such a perfect treasure, was not more sociable in his habits. "Dumb as a dormouse!" he muttered to himself one day, gazing in astonished perplexity at this "man-machine," as Sir Evan called him. "Mr. Talbot is so secret, Allan, that he would, if he could, conceal from all London for a week what o'clock it is. His reserve casts a great black shadow on our spirits, whenever he appears!"

Meanwhile the Chief, by his own philanthropic exertions, had, as his old military servant McDonald expressively observed, "added tails to many a working man's jacket, without taking them from the richer man's coat." The crumbling mud-hovels of Clanmarina had been gradually replaced by good stone-and-lime cottages, and

on the extensive Cairngorum property, 'every rood maintained its man.' The good Chief, generous to his last guinea, would gladly have extended his judicious encouragement, so as to enrich and benefit the starving Romanist population in that half of the village not his own, where the poor were made poorer every day, and kept at desperation-pitch by their expensive superstitions; but whatever money Sir Evan enabled them to earn, became like water poured on the sand, being confiscated by their confessor, Father Eustace, the next time they confessed.

"Indeed, Sir Evan," said Mr. Clinton, indignantly, "the Popish half of our village looks as if a fragment of some such countries as we have seen abroad, beggared by a grasping priesthood; as if a morsel of Spain, or Portugal, or Ireland, were transplanted into the Highlands."

"And certainly without '*benefit* of the clergy,'" added Lady Edith, sadly; "Mr. Eustace is a shepherd only in securing all the wool from his flock, and it is a wonder that they continue to submit."

"The priest persuades these poor people, to whom I have spoken, that his curse can bring an immediate judgment on any one he selects," replied Mr. Clinton. "In some countries where I formerly resided, the priests persuaded their ignorant proselytes, that they could, by a curse, metamorphose them into pigs or goats, and that it was quite a favour if they did not. Among the enslaved Papists of Clanmarina, they are taught to believe the loss of their cow would follow the slightest rebellion, or a sickness among their children. His Lordship's people dare not say 'puss' to a cat, without obtaining leave from the man they call 'Father.' How decidedly does our Bible forbid people to call any man in that sense 'Father!'"

"His influence is marvellous," observed Lady Edith, turning to Mr. Talbot, who always shunned conversation as anxiously as all the others courted it; "one would think that Mr. Eustace could persuade a wild bird to fly into his hand; and yet I might as well expect an answer from Beatrice's doll as from the priest, when we refer to him about our popish tenantry."

"He is not very scrupulous as to means," replied Mr. Clinton. "Could we not hold a committee here, Lady Edith in the chair, to consider that the power of Father Eustace in Clanmarina has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished? To many young papists, already, his examination for confessing them has been like the tree of knowledge, teaching them that knowledge of evil which in such an excess they could never otherwise have attained. He seems to have an intense curiosity in probing what have been the sins and temptations of others; and a Popish family of recently converted papists, say that he almost likes to make a show off, by the strange questions he asks, of his own knowledge on such painful and dangerous subjects."

Mr. Talbot felt himself unavoidably appealed to, and his reply, in a short monosyllable, came booming out like a single stroke on the gong.

"Father Eustace has now established a Benefit Club, to drain the village of its very latest farthing," added Mr. Clinton; "a sadly questionable benefit, indeed! The very poorest are to subscribe a monthly rate, for which each member on his death is entitled to one mass, provided his subscription has been regularly paid up. Had the Apostle Peter heard of such mercenary arrangements, would he not have said again, as he did once before, 'Thy money perish with thee?'"

"The Pope, who claims to be the 'Bishop of Bishops,' the infallible successor of St. Peter, is of a very different mind from that apostle himself, who says, 'We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold;'" replied Sir Evan, turning frankly round to Mr. Talbot, who sat with compressed lips and lack-lustre eyes. "Popery is not the poor man's church, because the priests, instead of saying, 'how hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God,' seem to think that the rich only shall enter; as they alone can buy themselves out of that imaginary purgatory, by the terrors of which they frighten so many ignorant victims into impoverishing their children, when leaving their last farthing for masses in favour of their own soul. I have quite an old-fashioned Popophobia."

Mr. Talbot, with a strange unaccountable smile, stole a short, sharp glance towards his pupil, which did not so entirely escape Sir Evan's notice as the tutor intended; and Allan's face became as scarlet as a cardinal's hat, while he seemed struggling under a spell.

"There is in the world now," said Lady Edith, while Mr. Talbot had become as grave and stolid as before, "a great deficiency in that wholesome terror of Jesuitism, which was once the protection of Britain against the greatest of evils; and I am struck with the sort of half-laughing denial people give to any suspicion of their having a Popish tendency, instead of indignantly repudiating what a Protestant should consider involves more than life."

"I am very desirous, Mr. Talbot," said Sir Evan, speaking with slow deliberative emphasis and turning yet more decidedly towards that silent gentleman, who still took no more audible part in this discussion than the tea-urn, "to fortify Allan's mind more thoroughly against Popery than has hitherto been deemed necessary in England, where no danger appeared, and therefore few precautions in educating the young were considered essential. We should not now be satisfied with mere vague generalities of instruction, such as might formerly have been a sufficient mental armour; but our whole energies must be devoted to the subject, that he may be thoroughly instructed to give a sufficient reason, at all times and without difficulty, for the faith that, I trust and believe, is in him."

Mr. Talbot seemed always diligently trying to be neither seen nor spoken to, and now his countenance became even more than usually destitute of expression,—his large eyes, averted from every one, evidently looked at nothing, and not a word proceeded from his lips; but he had become lividly pale. Allan gave an agitated glance at his uncle, shifted his seat uneasily, looked down, and coloured more deeply. A pause ensued—a very long pause. Sir Evan gazed in scrutinizing silence from Allan to his tutor, and he suddenly said, in a frank, half-jocular tone, “Pray, Mr. Talbot, did you ever play at a children’s game called ‘What is my thought like?’ You know all mine, but I cannot guess yours. If speech was given us, as Rousseau said, to conceal our thoughts, no doubt silence does it still better. But, truth to say, my conversation is like bad singing, that requires a good accompaniment. In short it would be quite a favour, now, if you could suggest what plan seems to you best for fortifying Allan’s mind against this new danger of Jesuitism.”

“I cannot see the danger,” answered Mr. Talbot, with a singular quietude of voice. “If any evil seemed to threaten my pupil, it would then become my duty to warn you and defend him.”

Sir Evan became plunged in deep thought now for several minutes, after which he added, with his penetrating eyes fixed on his very inscrutable guest, who looked, if it were possible to imagine such a thing of such a man, greatly embarrassed, “Your answer might have been given by a descendant of the Delphic oracles, but it does not relieve my mind. The avowed object of every Jesuit is to render each layman a mere puppet in the hands of his priest, with no more free-will than an empty suit of clothes, to think, act, eat, drink, or sleep only at the will of another mortal man—like himself, also, a sinner. Let Allan, therefore, have an enlightened knowledge of all the unbounded evils of Popery, that he may be prepared for that struggle between truth and superstition which is becoming every year more active in England,—which will remain alive now, with increasing vigour, conquering or to be conquered, so long as Britain continues an island; and respecting which, the present generation seem likely, in all probability, to leave behind them a legacy of bloodshed, anarchy, and death, to those who inherit the penalty of a fatal confidence in those Jesuits, who will betray every trust, except that of their superior, and every authority, except that of their own church.”

The effect of Sir Evan’s frank, open-hearted speech to Mr. Talbot was like that of sunshine on vinegar, making him only fifty times sourer than before. When Mr. Talbot soon after rose to retire, the face of a corpse could not have been so white, and there was a profound meaning in his very silence; but no tone or look betrayed whether he were pleased or displeased. As usual, he gave Allan a look to follow; and then the Chief rose also. With a very determined step and look, Sir Evan accompanied them upstairs, and re-

mained nearly an hour in the school-room with his nephew and the inscrutable tutor.

That night Allan slept in the dressing-room of his uncle, or at least he tried to sleep, for many wakeful thoughts disturbed him, and next morning Mr. Talbot had finally departed from the roof of Sir Evan McAlpine. He remained, however, on a visit of several weeks to Lord Eaglescairn, where he became the constant companion of Father Eustace, though still stoutly maintaining his title to be a Protestant clergyman in search of truth and perplexed with difficulties.

"Mr. Talbot would not be a Jesuit if he acknowledged himself one. Strange things happen in the world every day for which one cannot account," observed Lady Edith anxiously. "I wish Mr. Talbot may not be himself one of that mysterious and most formidable brotherhood, for they would enter a Protestant family, promising, like the Paris boarding-schools, to teach 'every accomplishment and any religion that may be preferred.'"

"Secresy is the main feature of the Jesuits, and it is also their main strength," said Sir Evan musingly; then fixing his large lustrous eyes on his young nephew, with a mien impressively grand, for it was full of natural grace and nobility, he added, "It seemed to me last night, Allan, as if Mr. Talbot exercised a very singular influence over you, and as if he were conscious of some greater hold over your duty and your affections than I can at all account for. The longer I think of his manner to you the more I become convinced that it was so. Explain to me at once, then, what is meant by the sort of secret understanding which evidently subsists between you."

"My dear uncle," replied Allan, his face drenched with scarlet and his eyes fastened on the carpet, "by no fault of mine, a secret was told me, which concerns myself, and which to tell would injure both Mr. Talbot and you."

"It would injure *me*!" exclaimed Sir Evan incredulously. "Out with it, my boy, and let the penalty rest on my head. I can fear no injury greater than this interruption of our entire and unreserved confidence."

Sir Evan held out his hand with a smile of cordial affection to Allan, who grasped it warmly, but for several minutes he made no reply, then suddenly looking up with his usual open and intelligent expression he said, "Will you trust me, uncle? Will you believe my assurance that this is not a secret that relates to my religious opinions at all, and there are two individuals who would be greatly damaged, in some respects, were I to reveal certain circumstances mentioned by Mr. Talbot."

"And I am one of those two individuals in jeopardy?" asked Sir Evan with a tone of undiminished disbelief. "Well! you never deceived me, Allan, and I see that in your eye which convinces me you are not deceiving me now; but, Allan, you are deceived. Mr. Talbot

treats you already like a puppet, for as he pulls the wires you must dance!"

"I think not. I think Mr. Talbot meant kindly, though I wish he had consulted my wishes before telling me anything that you must not know. I feel, my dear uncle, that to any one less generously candid I should appear very much in the wrong. It might have caused you to withdraw your confidence from me entirely."

"No, Allan. We have long understood each other, and if it rained secrets into this house at every window, Mr. Talbot shall make no division between you and me, if I can prevent it. Allan and Beatrice, my dear young friends,—were these the last words I am ever to speak to you both, I should say this: and if you forget all else that I ever said to you—if you forget me and all the love I have borne you, still remember this—Beware of a Jesuit. As you value truth, honour, independence, and a direct access to your own Creator, avoid a Jesuit. Guard your Protestant principles now, as you would guard the flickering light of a taper in a storm. I know not why, but there is an unusual solemnity in my thoughts to-day. Is it that some coming event has already cast its shadow on my spirit? None can tell; but be the events of life or death as God ordains, nothing can be a real evil, dear children, to one who adheres to his Bible and to the promises which it addresses to all. Come what may, I am ready."

From that day Sir Evan never rested till he had placed Allan, now a model of health, strength, and beauty, at Oxford, where he not only distinguished himself in every learned acquirement, but likewise in all athletic exercises.

CHAPTER V.

"Princes and priests may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath hath made.
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

GOLDSMITH.

SOME of Lord Eaglescain's villagers, struck by the obvious fact that they existed only as impoverished slaves to Father Eustace, were at length heard to speak of Sir Evan occasionally, with tears of admiration, and would gladly have sent their children to the Clanalpine Schools, where the Chief would as gladly have welcomed them, but both priest and peer forbade their doing so under penalty of excommunication. The Popish landlord and his confessor were quite aware that "Knowledge is power," but that was a power which they were determined not to extend in the village, that as many deluded votaries as possible might still submit in body and

soul to the blasting dominion of Popery. Among these misguided peasantry it proved most sadly true that wherever monks are in the greatest force, religion is in the least, and that where there are confessionals, there shall be abundance to confess; and the absolution of Father Eustace could do no more to purify their souls, than the words, "Be ye warmed and clothed," could have administered the necessaries of life to their bodies.

Sir Evan, with Lady Edith, and their two young protégés, taught in every cottage the great truth of truths by simply distributing and reading the Bible, while at the same time sending the people instructors in every simple branch of rural education.

Beatrice was astonished about this time to receive a large box of books, sent to her anonymously, with a few lines inclosed, saying, "These are the works of Protestant authors, and if you have any desire ever again to see your unknown relatives, read them carefully alone, show them to no one, and consider well their contents."

Despite this injunction, Beatrice took the box instantly to Sir Evan and Lady Edith, and at once showed them the letter, saying with tears of deep emotion, "I prefer known benefactors to unknown relatives; tell me then what I ought to do."

The volumes were all beautifully bound, and proved on examination to consist entirely of those little flimsy novellettes, written to starve rather than to nourish the young mind, and pronounced by very juvenile readers to be "so pretty." In the first which Lady Edith opened, there was described a very interesting nun, living among flowers and music, contrasted with a very miserable married woman, buffeting through a world of home-felt miseries, and then the death-bed of the nun was delineated when she ended her useless life in a rapture of impossible ecstasy, having not only done all her own duty, but left behind her a store of superfluous virtue to assist in the redemption of others.

"Such is the sugared poison administered in Protestant school-rooms now," said Lady Edith, "on subjects which were formerly to be found only in works of acknowledged theology, and of a distinct tendency openly acknowledged by the author; but all such secret machinations should be denounced in public and counteracted in private by every honest, straightforward Protestant who is what he seems."

Sir Evan had always encouraged the young people to awaken and indulge their imaginations by the good Old Mother Hubbard literature of his own boyhood, the strange imagery and picturesque narratives of which can lead to no ultimate bad effects, and are far safer outlets to that love of the marvellous inherent in poetical temperaments, than the legends of St. Patrick swimming across the channel on a paving-stone, St. Raymond being transported over the sea on his cloak, or St. Simon of the pillar standing immovably on the top of a column, and bowing his head down to his feet 11,550

times during twenty years ; an example gravely held up for imitation by Papists to the rising generation, and which would render them in a new, though not very useful sense, pillars of the church. Should modern Cardinals succeed in making many such modern saints, the statues now adorning the summit of many a tall column will have a struggle for their places, and new St. Simons will promote themselves to the highest elevation, *vice* Pitt or Fox, Nelson or Melville, superseded.

Lord Eaglescairn became every year more keen as an advocate for the total prostration of his village tenants to mere mechanical obedience ; not the enlightened attachment of head and heart to spiritual and temporal influence, but the animal drudgery of mere unreflecting submission to the authority of their priest and of their landlord. Sir Evan had the highest estimate of human nature, of its vast capabilities and noble destiny ; therefore his great endeavour was, by universal courtesy, and by unsparing efforts, to elevate each individual above the mere dregs of his nature, and he lived most in accordance with his own spirit, when diligently pursuing at every personal or pecuniary sacrifice the most enlightened plans for becoming the father and benefactor of his clan, leading them upward as he led them onwards, in the difficult path of those Christian principles, to be clearly traced out in a continual and prayerful study of their own Bibles.

Except Lord Eaglescairn and Father Eustace, few could have looked at the white-washed cottages of Clanmarina, and their sunny little gardens, crowded with luxuriant vegetables, and overshadowed by apple trees, without the liveliest admiration of Sir Evan's victorious benevolence, and the passing traveller often gave a sigh now to think that his own lot had been cast far from such a scene of rural beauty and peaceful industry.

Surrounded by labour and laughter and lighthearted poverty, Allan often asserted that his uncle might safely offer 100*l.* in Clanmarina for the discovery of a single weed, or a single neglected human being, without being able to detect one. Before 1850, Sir Evan had indeed achieved everything except impossibilities, and his own half of the village was transformed, as by a magician's wand, into the most perfectly lovely hamlet that poet or artist can represent. The houses "grew in beauty side by side," adorning natural scenery such as Canaletti might have been proud to paint, and enlivened by the fine salmon-stream, whirling and foaming like quicksilver along the mountain side.

It was a chivalrous sight to see Sir Evan, who kept up all the feudal magnificence of his ancestors, setting forth day after day for the moors or the salmon-fishing, equipped in his graceful plaid, and followed by his gallant "tail" of clansmen, and by all the numerous visitors who enjoyed his splendid hospitalities at Cairngorum Castle. He was a princely Chief. Sir Evan kept the best pointers, greyhounds, and horses, as well as the best grooms and gamekeepers

throughout the highlands, and his hardy tenants honoured their Chief the more enthusiastically, because he could have carried off the prize himself at all their competitions of strength and agility. The clansmen triumphantly hailed him as the best deer-stalker, the best shot, and the best salmon-fisher in the district, as well as the best of men.

Thus loved and respected by all classes, with sentiments of respect and attachment which never diminished, Sir Evan at the end of twelve superlatively happy years, gave his usual birthday dinner, which had taken place every successive October since he succeeded to his clan, with all the feudal grandeur of ancient times. What heart might not have felt a noble envy of the good Sir Evan, at this gay village festival, which was a model of rural felicity and innocent enjoyment, when beholding the beneficent change which his own labour, his own liberality, his own prayers, his own practical, vigorous, and well-considered benevolence had at last accomplished: and when in a wild burst of enthusiastic cheering it was eagerly acknowledged by many a warm heart around, the flashing eye of Sir Evan became yet brighter with pleasurable excitement, and a flush of deep emotion was on his cheek. The Chief, happier himself than usually falls to the lot of man, considered it a great deformity in country life, when there is too wide a gulf of separation between landlord and tenant: as he in his own sphere laboured for the indigent, they in their sphere laboured with their whole hearts for him, while the poorest, the weakest, the most helpless and suffering, found their own beloved Chief ready always with a word of sociable kindness to each, when cordially associating his feelings with theirs.



CHAPTER VI.

“Weep not for fair hopes crost ,
Weep not though friends grow cold ;
Weep not that death should part
Thine and the best-loved heart.
But weep—weep all thou can—
Weep—weep because thou art
A sin-defiled man.”

TRENCH.

THE life of Allan and of Beatrice, who were both now nearly grown up, had been one of ceaseless enjoyment, and having reached to the mature ages of nineteen and sixteen, they felt that year after year as it vanished away had been one of unbroken felicity as well as uninterrupted companionship. Their long walks with Sir Evan, and yet longer rides, their sea-side strolls with Lady Edith, and their long fire-side conversations with both, their extensive course of reading, and the wide circle of agreeable society with which they

met every successive season, had matured their young minds with an early knowledge of life in all its mysteries of thought and of feeling,—perhaps also of romance. Already many a visitor had admired Beatrice flitting like a young fairy in the hoary old towers of her highland home. Already one boisterous old boy of a hunting squire had actually proposed to her, and already Allan had discovered that among all Sir Evan's stranger guests there was an eclipsing beauty and an irresistible fascination, in the companion of his daily life which none could rival. Already the poetry and romance of existence were begun between Allan and Beatrice.

Few ever had a more exquisite enjoyment of life than Sir Evan, whose feelings were high and pure as the sun-light glittering on his native mountains. The good Chief, now in the glorious zenith of his manhood; seemed literally fenced about with prosperity, and laughingly said in a serio-comic voice one morning to Lady Edith, "How very soon the growth of children and of trees has made me feel old. This is my fortieth birthday, and already I am overshadowed by forests of my own planting, as well as over-topped by my own young nephew. I really feel," he added, in a tone of oddly mingled distress and delight, "as if our cup were so full that in this stormy world it cannot last."

Sir Evan stepped gaily forth into the dazzling brightness of a sunny morning, buoyant with the energy and vigour of his high-souled intellect and elastic spirit. With his own peculiar whistle he summoned a very willing companion in Allan, to go his usual round with him of pleasure and business.

Allan had now grown into a brilliant-looking youth, in eager pursuit of dazzling adventures. There was in the expression of his beautiful features an engaging frankness, as if he had neither the wish nor the power to conceal a thought; and his nobly-formed figure displayed a degree of elasticity and strength which enabled him to excel as he did in every exercise. Allan, encouraged by his good-humoured uncle, who always treated him now as an actual personage, had a laughing remark or a kind word for every clansman they met, and well every McAlpine knew that it came direct from the kindest of hearts as well as the happiest.

Yet Allan had one secret care, scarcely confided even to himself. He had recently discovered how deeply and fervently he loved Beatrice, though it was evident that a thousand impediments must prevent his even hinting his attachment to the almost idolized object of it, and still more to his uncle. Frank and open-hearted himself, the conduct of Beatrice had lately perplexed him. Hitherto their sympathy had been perfect and unbounded, united as their every feeling had been from infancy; and till very recently he had believed that nature, which had formed two young hearts for each other, would triumph in uniting them for ever. When had they not shared the same pleasures, wept for the same sorrows, looked forward to the same projects, conceived the same fancies, and

shared the same troubles? But now he observed an unaccountable change. There was on her countenance sometimes a sort of dreamy seriousness, and in her manner—a fitful agitation, which astonished and perplexed him, and of which he longed, as well as intended, to ask an explanation. But this day of brightness and sunshine raised the spirits of Allan, scattered every darker thought, and enabled him at once to put all his old half-ruined *chateaux en Espagne* into fresh repair, and into a style of more gorgeous architecture than ever. Beatrice must one day be his; for who could deserve her better by loving her more, or even half as much?

When tracing their steps homewards after sunset through Sir Evan's extensive deer-forest, Allan, with the wild glee and squirrel-like activity of boyhood, had sprung over walls and ditches in playful pursuit of his dog, when he suddenly observed, with great admiration and delight, a noble herd of deer advancing from Lord Eaglescairn's boundary towards him. The forked antlers and graceful dignity of the stags in advance, reminded Allan of the military movements of a regiment, and while he paused to observe their motions, the gamekeeper of Lord Eaglescairn, who had not observed young McAlpine, suddenly fired at the majestic leader of the drove. The noble animal instantly fell forward on his knees, but the next moment, making a rapid bound, recovered himself, and with the speed of lightning flew towards the place where Allan now stood crouching behind a tree, and vainly seeking concealment.

Sir Evan, alarmed for his nephew's security from the wounded and infuriated animal, saw with consternation that the keeper had slipped a fine deer-hound which he had previously held back, but which now rapidly gave chase to the enraged and wounded stag. Terror gave speed to the excited and powerful animal, which made directly towards Allan, with a rapidity and strength neither to be resisted nor evaded. In an instant young Allan was thrown down, and would have been transfixed to the ground the next moment, had not the Chief, though armed only with a stick, sprung forward, and with calm resolution placed himself in readiness to await the onset.

The stag, maddened with pain and terror, rushed upon Sir Evan, but Allan, struggling up to his feet, flew to his uncle's assistance. A short but severe struggle ensued, which might have ended well; but suddenly the crack of a rifle was heard from behind a tree; the gamekeeper had fired before he perceived that the stag was not alone, and in an instant the noble form of McAlpine's Chief lay mortally wounded on the grass.

Sir Evan had shouted to warn the gamekeeper, but not in time. The turf in a moment was saturated with blood, and Allan, uttering a wild shriek of anguish, and forgetful of all else but his uncle's danger, threw himself on the ground by his side, and tried to staunch the blood that flowed in rivers from Sir Evan's side. Pale faces gathered round, with looks of horror, and trembling voices

murmured in accents of grief, yet all seemed as a wild dream to Allan, while, with frantic efforts, he tried to bandage up the gaping wound. Still there was a slight tremor in Sir Evan's limbs which gave Allan a faint hope that life was not yet extinct ; but his hopes were of short duration, while from the chaos of his bewildered soul there issued a groan which might have pierced the very ear of death.

For one short moment the dying Chief opened his eyes, and gazed with a faint slow glance on the bright blue sky over his head, on his own far-off hills, on the noble towers of his long-cherished home, and on the face of his much-loved nephew. His gaze lingered on Allan. It was a look of sad and solemn farewell ; then, stretching out his hand to him for the last time on earth, he, with a gentle sigh, closed his eyelids, never more to see the light of day.

For the first time in his life, young Allan was now in the presence of death ; but his consciousness had fled, and during a length of time he remained with Sir Evan's hand clasped in his own, completely insensible. Never was there a bitterer sorrow than among the mourners around, nor did there ever follow behind any corpse a sadder cavalcade than that which bore the lifeless body of Sir Evan to the castle. There were not few who felt as if they could willingly have died for their Chief, while all wept at the thought, that from the many he loved, and from the many who loved him, their noble-minded benefactor was gone for ever. His kind heart, his high spirit, his generous schemes, his bright talents, his earthly hopes, were all now to be buried in the dust ; but there was a glorious confidence remaining for those who had shared his pious hopes, that though he rested from his labours, his works would follow him. A small Bible, which had been for years his inseparable companion, was afterwards found in his pocket, whence for many a long year it had never been absent ; and in his desk was a letter to Allan, written many months before, full of all the affectionate counsel that a dying parent might have given to his only son, and fervently recommending from his own experience a life of energetic Christian usefulness, as the happiest that this short-lived world affords.

CHAPTER VII.

"I've seen yon weary winter's sun
Twice forty years return ;
And every year has added proofs
That man was made to mourn."—BURNS.

WHEN Allan, after several days of delirium and fever, enfeebled to the weakness of a child, recovered some recollection, his cheeks and

lips were as white as if there had never been a drop of blood in them, and as long as he lived afterwards, the colour never returned to his face. Allan's first vague recollection was a frightful consciousness of misfortune; and there was around him in his own room, from which Lady Edith had but a moment before retired, a churchyard silence and darkness, most awful and impressive to his young mind. He had been three days delirious, and with returning consciousness came the feeling that life itself was an intolerable burden, since the best of benefactors, the kindest of uncles, had fallen in his defence.

Lady Edith and Beatrice had sat up for several successive nights uninterruptedly with Allan, and this was the first moment he had been left alone; but they had retired, leaving him asleep, that they might weep unheeded together, and for the last time gaze on Sir Evan's remains. Feeble as an infant, yet unconquerably restless with the remains of fever, Allan found it impossible in his agitated state to remain still; and after some time, hearing under his window a low murmuring sound of suppressed voices, accompanied by the trampling of many feet, he languidly rose, and almost staggered to the window. There a sight met Allan's eye which shook his soul to its very centre, while it riveted his gaze with awe and overwhelming grief. It was a morning of glorious sunshine; the black-birds and thrushes singing their sweetest notes, and the whole glittering landscape bathed in light; but far as his eye could reach stood a silent multitude, clothed in black,—a gathering throng, which increased every moment. Hundreds had assembled there for Sir Evan's funeral, but not a voice was heard, not a man could look up. In every face there were mourning, desolation, and awe, for it was a day to be remembered in Clanmarina till the village and clan should be no more.

The church-bell now rang a measured and melancholy peal; the massive gates of the Castle were slowly opened, and there issued forth a procession of all the farmers, clergymen, and gentlemen from fifty miles round, many from a yet longer distance, who had joined the mournful cavalcade, which now in the silence of unutterable grief, bore the Chief of McAlpine from a long-cherished home to an honoured grave.

No bagpipe sounded that day, nor was there a drop of whiskey drunk in the village, but each orphaned family grieved apart in their homes, while seeking in secret prayer the only comfort that could reach those who had lost a father, a benefactor, and such a true Highland chief on the best of models as the good and chivalrous Sir Evan McAlpine.

He was not laid in any moss-grown vault, with every awful emblem of death that can add horrors to the tomb, but in a breezy slope of daisied grass, railed off from a corner of the old churchyard, which Sir Evan had long since prepared and adorned for himself against the time when his dust should return to dust, and his

spirit to God who gave it. Sir Evan had always disliked the dark mouldering gloom within the old family sepulchre, and the great marble urns which commemorated all the former Sir Allans and Sir Evans, as if their bodies had been burned like heathens; but he wished his little cemetery to be planted with a cedar, the emblem of his clan; he wished to lie in the churchyard amongst them, and he used to add with solemnity, "May many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave."

In great cities and large communities, how strange yet unavoidable it is to observe, that small is the space occupied by even the greatest and best of men in the public eye, and a single line in the newspaper obituary is necessarily all the commemoration given perhaps to the most graceful, accomplished, and agreeable member of society, whose wit, vivacity, and accomplishments have been the delight and ornament of every circle he adorned. Often must those who have known the dead pause over the business-like announcement of his decease, and think that little the wide world of readers can conceive how much is lost to many, when travellers in a railway carriage or members at their clubs read such a simple record as this,—“Died, at Cairngorum Castle, in his 40th year Sir Evan McAlpine, Bart.”

At Clanmarina that event was like the sun falling out of the firmament. Old Andrew McAlpine, the poor idiot of the village, long the ‘willing butt of every urchin in the neighbourhood, had mustered a few rags of mourning that day to follow the procession that took his honoured Chief to the home of death, and as some heedless children on his return uttered a passing jest upon him, he exclaimed in accents of piercing misery, while tears helplessly coursed each other down his furrowed old cheeks—

“Dinna flyte me now, bairns. I could bite my heart in two for grief. This is the blackest hour you will ever see in Glenalpine. The clan and the village are orphans to-day.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Oh! known the earliest and esteem’d the most
 Dear to a heart where naught is left so dear;
 Though to my aching sight for ever lost,
 In dreams deny me not to see thee here.”—BYRON.

ALLAN, when the moving multitude, like a dark cloud, passed silently out of sight, weak as he felt, slowly sank on his knees and prayed. It was now that he experienced the Protestant comfort of pouring out his feelings to a listening Saviour; and as he did so, tears at last came to his relief, while in the prostration of agonised

sorrow he thought of him who first had taught him to seek for heaven, and now was gone to point the way.

In the abject depths of his sorrow, Allan had scarcely noticed a slight noise in the room, till it was again repeated; he felt a heavy hand laid on his shoulder, and looking up with a start of astonishment, the young mourner saw before him his old tutor Mr. Talbot.

There had always been an extraordinary power in Mr. Talbot's eye over Allan on the very few occasions when that eye was allowed to speak, or even to look. The expression he threw into it now spoke the deepest commiseration for his former pupil, but it spoke also the perfect hopelessness of such prayers as his own, and placing his hand again on the shoulder of his old scholar, with a friendliness of manner which nothing but actual rudeness could have repelled, he sat down beside Allan, and spoke to him with masterly eloquence and most plausible persuasiveness for more than an hour, during which Mr. Talbot alluded to those circumstances relating to the speaker himself, which had before filled Allan with surprise.

"You are aware," added Mr. Talbot, "that it was no ordinary inducement which allured me to become your tutor, and that no ordinary ties exist between us."

"Yet tell me," asked Allan with agitated eagerness, "duty to my uncle's memory bids me ascertain this point, before, even allowing for this important disclosure, I can continue to see you here, Mr. Talbot—Are you a papist?"

"I understand no such designation," replied Mr. Talbot drily.

"But," continued Allan resolutely, "I must know if you belong to the Popish Church."

"Even Catholics only confess to their priest, Allan, and you are not mine," answered Mr. Talbot, rising with a look such as Allan had not seen since he was in the school-room; but no word or words could have better expressed a just indignation as he added, "For your good I have had some concealments from you. These are now explained; if there are more, await my time to disclose them."

Allan, weakened in mind and body, found it easier now languidly to let the stream of Mr. Talbot's remarks flow through his mind, than either to resist or to stop them, and he lay back in a state of almost fainting weakness, till at length the door opened, and Lady Edith, pallid with grief and with watching, re-entered to continue her attendance on the beloved invalid.

Mr. Talbot was one of those individuals who, without ever appearing to look at anything, saw as well behind him apparently as before, and with eyes that no one could ever catch, observed everybody and everything: he became conscious therefore, at once, of Lady Edith's astonished entrance, but he did not really seem aware that another had been added to the party. Lady Edith's surprise at discovering Mr. Talbot in the room, she subdued almost immediately, not to agitate Allan, who was reclining back in his arm

chair at the window, his teeth chattering, his limbs benumbed, his whole frame shivering, and the cold tears congealed on his cheek, an image of helpless anguish.

A severe relapse brought Allan to the very verge of the grave, and long weeks passed during which a dry, wasting, delirious fever, which seemed rapidly consuming his very existence, made it doubtful whether a hope could be entertained of the young sufferer's recovery.

Lady Edith, resolutely extinguishing every thought that might disable her for any duty of affection, ceaselessly attended on Allan, and by every soothing care tried, but tried long in vain, to calm the agitated spirit of her beloved charge; and the sorrowful Beatrice, while mourning with all the uncontrollable affliction of youth for her benefactor, yet became solemnly composed whenever there was an office of tenderness which could be done for the dear and suffering companion of all her past days, now hovering apparently over a premature grave.

The balance between life and death vibrated so precariously, that an atom either way would have turned the scale, and there were some things in the ravings of Allan's delirium, in respect to Mr. Talbot, which greatly perplexed his two constant attendants, Beatrice and Lady Edith. It was in the depths of night that Allan at last awoke as from a terrifying dream of feverish horror, to consciousness. Feebly raising himself on his trembling arm, he slowly drew back the bed-curtain and looked out. Beside the dim light of a single taper sat Lady Edith, leaning her head on her hand while earnestly perusing the Holy Scriptures. She was in black, and her pale face had become so wasted that Allan, in his dream-like half-conscious state, felt as if it were scarcely a living mortal that he beheld, till at length she raised her eyes to heaven with an expression of such devout and soul-felt resignation, such intense feeling, and such acute anguish, that Allan never afterwards forgot it. Long he lay immovable, with many a vague thought struggling through his enfeebled mind, and he felt the deep solemnity of that silence which was around him, as if his spirit were passing into eternity. Still Lady Edith continued to read and to pray, while Allan gathered composure from seeing hers; and when at length Beatrice stole into the room to take her accustomed place beside Lady Edith, Allan felt that he once more belonged to the world and its affections.

Faintly calling both his beloved attendants to his bed-side, Allan clasped the hand of Lady Edith to his lips with all the energy he had left, and burst into tears. Lady Edith wept, unable longer to control herself, and the heart of Beatrice, now the first time they had all mourned together, was wrung with renewed grief. But the curtain must drop over that extremity of human woe which can only suffer and submit.

During Allan's lingering convalescence, it became apparent that, though youth and a good constitution had triumphed in restoring

him to life, yet the bright colour which had glowed in his cheeks was never to return. His fine countenance remained always afterwards pale as marble, and the expression of his splendid eyes became for ever overshadowed by the gloom of a catastrophe, which haunted his memory night and day with ceaseless regret. From this time forth, the friendly assiduities of his late tutor became unceasing.

No discouragement on the part of Lady Edith could for an instant be even perceived by Mr. Talbot, and the "not at home" of McDonald seemed now to have lost its power. Mr. Talbot always advanced with a look of friendly respect, and with the air of a most welcome guest, who must have been expected, and from whom no apology was necessary, except that he had not come sooner, or could not remain longer. Lady Edith felt as if words had lost their meaning, and looks their expression, when she found that no earthly power of language or of glances could start a single doubt in the mind of Mr. Talbot that he had become necessary to the happiness of Allan, and even of herself.

Day after day rolled on, and the persevering visitor's visits still continued; while the discouragement given by Lady Edith produced no more apparent effect than a flake of snow on the summit of Mont Blanc. "The block from which to cut out a Jesuit, should be adamant," said Lady Edith to Beatrice. "How bitterly is it now brought home to me that there exists no longer any head of this house to forbid Mr. Talbot's dangerous visits." Lady Edith Tremorne, suffering from her own infinite grief, and sick at heart, was herself preparing, with mournful regret, to make a home elsewhere for herself and Beatrice, knowing that Allan must go immediately to join his father and mother, now on their overland route homewards from India, and expecting to meet their son at Rome.

Allan, being restored, in about three weeks, to some degree of health, felt that duty bade him go and announce the first intelligence to his father of that sad and unexpected event which had placed Sir Robert at the head of his family. No sooner did all the mysterious bustle of a hurried departure begin at Cairngorum Castle, than Mr. Talbot heard of his former pupil's projected flight, when he carelessly remarked, how fortunately it was timed, as he also was going in that direction on the same day; and, with that winning attraction of manner which he could assume when it suited his plans, declared he would gladly pilot his young friend through all the intricacies of his route, "unless," he added, in smiling expectation of being contradicted, "you possibly prefer to travel, like a Queen's messenger, alone."

Allan, looking to the dismal prospect of a solitary journey before him,—the past, the present, and the future steeped in sorrow,—in his first grief, and the greatest he could imagine,—seemed inclined to relieve the intense unhappiness of his life, by accepting a proposal so undeniably agreeable; therefore he almost felt piqued at the suppressed consternation which he detected in Lady Edith's eye and

voice, calm and pale as now she always was, when this proposition became first started. Strong in youthful self-confidence, he afterwards entreated "Aunt Edith" to make her mind easy, as nothing that Mr. Talbot said on religious subjects could ever influence him now. "It was only when Mr. Talbot lived here my ignorance of the danger that caused any risk," he added, confidently. "But I am as safe now as Westminster Abbey."

CHAPTER IX.

"My Anah ! let me call thee mine,
Although thou art not. 'Tis a word I cannot
Part from—though I must from thee." BYRON.

Who has not lived to awaken some morning and find all the world become one dreary blank, in which the light of day seems but a mockery of woe? To the young hearts of Allan and Beatrice life seemed now to have lost its bloom, for every scene and every sensation of their existence had hitherto been associated with their lamented benefactor. Deeply as Lady Edith regretted to part from Allan, yet hers was never for one moment a selfish nature ; therefore she even hastened the event, though so deeply deplored, consoling herself in all her own irremediable grief with the hope that a change of scene might restore the elasticity of a young spirit that seemed now as if darkened for ever by the gloom of a catastrophe never to be enough lamented, and scarcely even yet to be realized.

Mournful indeed was the last day spent by the three almost heart-broken survivors of a family circle so lately the happiest on earth. The grief of Lady Edith when they met at breakfast had all the depth of mature feeling, and was calm, solemn, silent, yet not the less acute in contemplating Allan's approaching departure ; but Beatrice, unable to control a burst of girlish sorrow for the loss of her much-loved playmate and companion, stole away to conceal the hot blinding tears which could not be hid, and throwing herself on the favourite seat of Sir Evan under an old cedar-tree in the glen, where the creeping ivy twined around its gnarled trunk, relieved her heart by a paroxysm of unutterable grief. The more she thought of her kind benefactor, of her happy home, of all that was involved in the loss of both, the more agonized was her sorrow, while her tears fell unheeded like rain upon the dead leaves around, for it was autumn, the death-bed of nature.

A letter was in her hand, which she endeavoured with grave perplexity to read, but constantly the interruption came upon her of a fresh access of tears, for the pages contained that which brought to

Beatrice for the first time in her life that irresistible consciousness, sooner or later forced in the hour of trial upon every breathing mortal, that, the careless joys of childhood over, the long futurity of life must be one of many sorrows, difficulties, and fears, of baffled hopes, of unexpected perplexities, perhaps of harrowing misery to end only in the grave. At last, completely exhausted, Beatrice leaned her forehead on her clasped hands, which rested on the back of the seat, and tried to think and tried to pray, in hopes of regaining power to read and understand a letter clandestinely conveyed to her table by some unknown hand that morning, with which she was greatly perplexed.

It would have been impossible for Beatrice to imagine how long she had remained alone beneath the old cedar-tree, with a rapid succession of thoughts whirling through her brain, when at length it became more and more obvious to her that she must go home. At the very moment, however, when Beatrice was about unwillingly to rise, she saw Allan at a distance approaching on the well-known path, and evidently in search of her. The next moment he was by her side, an unwonted glow on his cheek, and an expression of momentary pleasure in his saddened countenance as he took her hand in his own, saying,—“Why leave your old companion, Beatrice, to shed tears alone for a sorrow that we both equally feel? How can either of us exist with no one to read, walk, and pray with,—no one even to quarrel with? Beatrice! it all ends to-morrow!”

Allan had tried to assume a tone of careless ease, but he paused in his agitated sentence, while his young companion listened with a look of shy and startled attention; but instead of proceeding, he began hurriedly gathering the acorns strewed around, arranged them in several different forms on the seat, and at last threw them all impatiently away, saying, in a low and almost inaudible voice,—“Beatrice! you will not forget me?”

“Allan!” replied she in trembling accents, and her eyes were more eloquent than even her voice, “do I ever forget? Oh, no I have much to remember—much indeed! happier hours than we can ever have again, and all, all spent with you,—all made happy by him who loved us both, and whom I must never pass an hour of my life without thinking of and mourning for.”

“Yes, Beatrice; but I shall be here no more to sympathise in your grief. If it be more blessed to give than to receive, I think it is also more exquisite to love than be loved, and the greatest happiness left to me now is my devoted love to you, Beatrice,” said Allan, a deep stain of scarlet for that one moment tinging his cheek, and his voice quivering with emotion while she turned hurriedly away; “you have long known every thought of my heart except the depth of its attachment to yourself. Promise me, Beatrice, that you will one day be my Beatrice.”

“Oh, Allan!” exclaimed the weeping girl, in a tone of unmistake-

able astonishment and regret, "you cannot mean it! You must not say it."

"Why not?" asked Allan with a piercing glance of scrutiny, while evidently shocked and disappointed, at her obvious distress; "did there never enter into your school-girl's head before a kind of a sort of notion, Beatrice, that our hopes and fears and joys and sorrows might become even more entirely united into one than they have always hitherto been, that all our childish quarrels and childish reconciliations might end, like a well-practised piece of music, in a harmonious duet? Now give me a promise that it shall be so, and do not keep gazing into that rose-bud as if counting the leaves or looking there for an answer. Let me look if I can find your reply hid in the leaves!"

"Allan," replied Beatrice, in a tone of mournful tenderness, which thrilled to his inmost heart, "life has become to me a succession of sad separations, and we part to-morrow! Oh! what a farewell to us, who know not how or where we shall ever meet again."

"But why, Beatrice?" asked Allan earnestly, with astonishment, and with a certain degree of pique at this farewell-for-ever tone, while her face, figure, and whole attitude bore the impress of hopeless crushing grief; "Is it because I am young, and that you consider me therefore a fool incapable of being constant? Beatrice, we have a sort of vested right to each other's affections, and judging by my own heart, you cannot forget me! Is our companionship of so many years to be no more between us than that of the poker and tongs? I shall hate, abhor, and detest any person, whoever he may be, who shall ever presume to interfere with my hope of gaining you. Tell me, then, Beatrice, before our sad farewell is said, that my love is really and amply returned. See how the sun smiles on us now, as you ought to smile on me."

"Allan," replied Beatrice, with an intense effort to be calm, but her white lips quivered as she spoke, "my heart must never know on earth any feelings but friendship. Never! Its kindest wishes and prayers shall always follow you——"

"What is the use of kind wishes, Beatrice, if you, who could make me happy, and you only, never mean to consent to the only hope of our having one home again? Promise me that we shall!"

"Allan," replied Beatrice, in a low, almost heart-broken accent, while a pang of anguish thrilled through her frame, "do not ask me to say what must never be said. You and I have both been instructed by one who preferred duty to life, and I have a very sad duty now to his memory. I had no right to one of the thousand benefits with which he surrounded me! Everybody warned Sir Evan that you, the heir of his ancient house, might become attached to a nameless foundling, but for my sake he overlooked the danger, and generously,—oh, how generously!—gave us a home together.

Father Eustace, who always takes a strange interest in my actions, and even seems to claim some mysterious authority over them, told me, when we met accidentally yesterday, that now the world loudly blames Sir Evan for rashness, and that your relations have long been indignantly remonstrating against my remaining here. Think how kind it was of Sir Evan to brave them all!"

"To brave whom? I have no authentic relations but one uncle, (a very interfering one he seems of late inclined to be,) some Irish aunts who live at Rome, and my kind, good-humoured father, who thinks everybody should marry as he did, for love. What can any Father Eustace know about Lady Dorchester, my aunt, and Miss Ambrose? What interest can he have in the matter, and what right has he to interfere at all?"

"He says that in this whole county it is considered now the one great mistake of Sir Evan's life to have brought us up together," added Beatrice, while two large tears rolled slowly down her scarlet cheeks, and the small hand with which she covered her face, shook with emotion. "But I solemnly declared to Father Eustace, as solemnly as if I were taking an oath in the presence of my lost benefactor himself, that unless my origin become known, I shall live and die, as Father Eustace says I ought—nameless and solitary!"

"Dear Beatrice, I cannot bear to hear you talk so," replied Allan, affecting the cheerfulness he evidently did not feel. "What on earth do I care whether you ever had a grandmother at all, or a succession of grandmothers? Have I not often advised you to build up an imaginary pedigree for yourself? The most proud and conceited children in the world are said to be those in the foundling hospitals, because they all fancy themselves people of consequence *incog.* Why not hope the best, Beatrice?"

"But I must not act on such vague hopes," replied she. "I am, as we both know, belonging to nobody, and possessing nothing, except through the generous kindness of generous friends."

There was in the manner of Beatrice at all times a modesty, reserve, and timidity truly engaging; but now, to all the graces of youth was added a degree of thoughtful sensibility, and a look of ingenuous diffidence, which was evidenced by a quick succession of blushes rivalling in hue the wild rose in the hedge beside her, while a tear and a smile struggled in her face for the mastery. Her ardent young lover continued in accents of fervent emotion, while the buoyancy of youth and natural good spirits caused the cloud of sorrow for a moment to flit from his brow, "Do you remember Beatrice, that day when my best of uncles called you 'the Pearl of Clanmarina,' and smiled when I said you were the pearl of Britain—of the whole world? He must have seen then what I felt, and did not disapprove. Now that you have confessed my love to be returned, I am like a diver with the pearl secured. I feel a presentiment, Mrs. Incredulous, that we must end in being happy, though

I would much rather begin with being so. What can be the meaning of Father Eustace's interference? One would think he wished to marry you himself, or to bury you in a cloister."

"Allan," whispered Beatrice, in a low tone of great agitation, "the only secret I have on earth is connected with the nunnery at Inverness. I received this letter yesterday through Father Eustace, and cannot hurt the feelings of my best friend, Lady Edith, during our sorrow, by showing her such a document."

Allan hurriedly snatched a packet which Beatrice tremblingly held out to him, and was astonished to find in it a strong appeal to the honour of Beatrice, not to throw herself on Lady Edith, who had too much sensitive delicacy to betray the inconvenience it must entail upon her now to adopt a friendless orphan, and the document ended by darkly hinting that there were relations ready to place her in a situation of splendid independence, but for the insuperable obstacle of her belonging to an opposite faith—a faith which her own relatives would lay down their lives and their fortunes willingly to destroy, could it be but crushed out of the earth. Beatrice was admonished that as she had been accidentally thrown among heretics, and exclusively brought up by them, she must naturally be quite in the dark, and it was proposed as a test of her willingness candidly to consider the faith of her own kindred, that she should make the first use of her recently acquired independence, by retiring for six months to the convent of St. Ignatia, there to hear much relating to her temporal as well as her eternal prospects, of which she must otherwise remain for ever and ever ignorant.

Allan paused in speechless astonishment at the conclusion of this unaccountable communication, and disguised as the handwriting evidently was, he felt an unconquerable conviction that he had seen it before. Gradually his assurance became doubly sure, that the author of this letter was Father Eustace, and a dim idea crossed his mind of what his uncle had said and suspected formerly, concerning an interest stronger than could be easily accounted for having been betrayed by that Jesuit priest in the fate and fortunes of Beatrice, when a child; and his whole thoughts became absorbed in reviving the circumstances, till recalled to himself again by the voice of his much-loved companion, saying, in accents quivering with emotion, "Delay it as we may, Allan, the moment of saying our long farewell must come at last. Let us hope that it is not for ever; but who can tell?"

"One thing I do know, Beatrice, that worlds shall not induce me to relinquish you," replied Allan, in a tone of good-humoured obstinacy; "and as it is not in your nature to be fickle or faithless, what then can prevent our future happiness together?"

"Think not of that," replied Beatrice, in a voice low and husky with grief; "I must not—dare not listen to you, Allan. Brotherly affection I may cherish and do value from you; but any dearer or

happier hopes must for ever be denied to an outcast like myself, without a name or a relative."

"Then, Beatrice, you cannot love me as I love you, or a whole legion of Father Eustaces could not induce you to make such a resolution. It is all very amiable and sensible, perhaps, but it is not love."

"Yes, Allan, it is; but ours must be, while I continue a nameless foundling, only a forbidden love," said Beatrice, clasping her hands over her face, in speechless grief. "Go, Allan, to your father, and forget one who has no father. I have told Father Eustace that you shall be free as the air we breathe, unless with the consent of every one who has a right to influence your choice, Allan, and especially with Lady Edith's."

"Then, dear Beatrice, hear a promise I make on this spot, and in this hour, never to be cancelled. Till we meet here again under the shadow of our own old haunted cedar-tree, my hand shall remain irrevocably pledged to you; and unless assured by your own lips that you actually prefer another, nothing earthly shall induce me to resign you,—nothing but my last dying breath. Let there be an entire trustfulness in our love for each other, Beatrice," said Allan, his speaking eyes fixed on hers, with all the deep feeling of a first and only love. "To please you, Beatrice, and to satisfy your very interfering adviser, Father Eustace, with whom I shall have some words when we meet next, there need be no other engagement between us now than my unchangeable attachment, which nothing can alter. Surely, Beatrice, you cannot doubt your own power of exciting, and mine of feeling, such a love as can and shall survive every vicissitude?"

"Let us be friends—but only friends! Be my kind brother, as formerly, Allan; but our farewell now must be that only of old companions, old friends, and," added Beatrice, for a moment breaking into the sunshine of her own bewitching smile, "old foes, too, Allan! Many a little breeze we have had! For me you shall not sacrifice——"

"Stay, Beatrice!—there can be no sacrifice between you and yours,—your own devoted Allan. My first wish on earth will now be, with my father's leave, to return and claim you as my beautiful bride. No one shall be my friend who is not friendly to you, and my heart shall always continue like a cell in a monastery, with but one tenant, till we meet again on this very spot, alone as we are now. If you have changed—if!—Beatrice, could that be? Oh, no!—let it be considered impossible. Hope tells me a flattering tale; and yet why not satisfy me with the assurance that you love as I do? Why look so cold and constrained, and almost indifferent?"

"Perhaps, Allan, my heart is more foolish than you think it," replied Beatrice, with a conscious blush and an unconscious smile; "I cannot refuse to continue in one kind heart, the cause of affectionate hopes, fears, thoughts, wishes, and prayers. You shall have

a place in all mine. Think, Allan, what you must be to one like myself, with no brother, no father, not even a friend except yourself and Lady Edith; yet we never shall be more than of old to each other, without the consent of every one who has a right to direct your actions. Nor," added Beatrice, in a half-jesting tone of seriousness, "not without your own consent—for who knows how your constancy may be tried? I remain where every twig and every gate-post reminds me of our happy rambles together, but it is said that no one ever marries his first love, and you go where all may combine to make you forget me."

Beatrice now gave way to a stormy burst of girlish tears, and neither could speak as Allan and she walked home together in silence, their steps, usually so airy and elastic, now pensive and slow; but in turning a corner of the shrubbery, Father Eustace appeared strolling slowly along at some distance. Allan instantly, colouring with a look of angry irritation, started forward in pursuit of the priest; but when, after advancing a few hurried steps, he looked back for an instant at Beatrice, she had fainted. Her swoon was long, during which Allan almost frantically used every means for her recovery, yet she neither moved nor spoke. It was not till he began to fear she would recover no more, that Beatrice slowly opened her eyes, and saw Father Eustace, like an Egyptian mummy, standing immovable. He seemed as if in deep and stern thought, while Allan, on his knees by her side, lavished every term of endearment on his own beloved Beatrice. No sooner did she seem entirely recovered, than Father Eustace, to her great surprise, offered Beatrice his arm, and did not again take his singularly observant eyes off Allan till they had all safely reached home, when he said in tones of affected regret, "It is sad to sever the hearts of those who love, especially young hearts incapable of anticipating all the difficulties in their futurity; but a time is at hand when you must say a long farewell, and it were well for you both that it should now be a final one. Mr. McAlpine, you have a destiny to fulfil,—an important destiny. Let me advise you, as the best of friends and well-wishers, to remember each other as brother and sister, but as no more, for you never can be more. I know both the origin and the future destiny of Miss Farinelli. She never can be yours."

Allan started with astonishment and consternation while he gazed incredulously on the cold stern face of Father Eustace; but Beatrice trembled and looked down to conceal the tears flowing in torrents over her burning cheeks; while the priest gave them what he called an explanation of his words, which only left the subject, when he concluded, considerably darker than before, and involved in most inextricable mystery.

"Beatrice!" said Allan, as she hurriedly left him, "for me, this world shall hold no other but you! No possible circumstance can change me."

"I judge of you by myself, and believe you, Allan," said the

young girl, turning tearfully back. "Alas! how lonely we shall both feel; how solitary my life will seem! When I read, sing, or paint now, there will be no cheerful companion to criticise or encourage me. Every flower will seem faded and withered; the birds all singing out of tune: the sun become darkness; and our own favourite pool, when I look into it, will now reflect no face but my own, looking sad, lonely, and perhaps, Allan, even cross, as you used to call me always, if I felt dull."

"Ah, Beatrice! those were happy days," said Allan, watching tenderly the blush on her cheek and the tear in her eye. "I wish you found it as hard to part from me, as I feel it to part from you."

CHAPTER X.

"The man who first invented speaking the truth was a much cunninger fellow than the world is apt to give him credit for."

GOLDSMITH

GREAT had been the unforeseen changes of the last few weeks to Allan, for they had produced within their narrow bounds events enough to have occupied a life-time. Strange alterations were now gathering round a house, lately the happiest and now one of the saddest in the world; but final separations are and ought to be indescribable. Allan was leaving home, to grapple with life in a new scene, and to his own surprise as much as to that of Beatrice, he found himself submitting to the companionship of Mr. Talbot, who put so plausible and pleasant a face on everything, that it was impossible for the young people to look upon him, even though he had evidently sided with Father Eustace in his interference, as anything worse than merely a blundering friend, meaning kindly, but acting indiscreetly.

"Do not be alarmed," replied Allan, in reply to an anxious remonstrance of Lady Edith's, on account of the increasing influence she observed that Mr. Talbot had recently gained. "Some very singular circumstances once transpired between us, that entirely alter my view of Mr. Talbot. His character is so strictly upright that he means to set the leaning tower of Pisa straight as we pass it."

"Allan," replied Lady Edith, with tears of anxiety filling her eyes, "I thought that nothing could have aggravated all my present sorrow, but to lose you in company with Mr. Talbot overpowers me with alarm. You tell me he is improved, but I fear only in external manner. The adder may change his skin, but the poison remains. Surely your uncle's decision to banish Mr. Talbot should be sacred."

"He did not know a circumstance which, to relieve your mind, dear Lady Edith, I must now reveal in confidence. You may remem-

ber that my grandfather, infuriated at my father's marriage, put a codicil to his will, that if my uncle, Sir Evan, ever knowingly brought an Ambrose into this house, he should forfeit the enormous sum of ready money Sir Allan left. Guess, Lady Edith, who Mr. Talbot really is!"

"Who?" asked Lady Edith and Beatrice in breathless suspense.

"You remember, perhaps, to have heard that a brother of my mother's was adopted by a Popish relative, who promised that he should be brought up a Protestant, but who placed him to be educated in the Jesuits' college at St. Omer?"

"Not surely Mr. Talbot?" asked Lady Edith, in astonishment, and with inexpressible dismay.

"No other!" replied Allan earnestly. "I was startled at first that my uncle should have entered this house on false pretences, but you see there was no other way in which he could gain access to me, and Mr. Talbot's love for my mother made him very desirous to know the son of a favourite sister. He cannot influence my creed one jot or tittle, but I must think that, as he says, his near relationship gives him some little right to my respectful attention."

Lady Edith sat like a statue of melancholy amazement, and tears sprang into the eyes of Beatrice, but no more passed respecting Mr. Talbot while Allan remained at home, though the ladies sometimes saw his dark stern face looming in the distance beside Allan.

During the last hour spent together by the three almost heart-broken survivors of a domestic circle, so lately happier than the happiest, and now about to be so sadly dispersed, Lady Edith read to her two young friends the 14th chapter of St. John. There was an inconceivable melody and mournfulness in the tone of her beautiful voice, when she began with those consolatory words, "Let not your heart be troubled," and her voice trembled at the last when she concluded.

For many days afterwards the vision haunted Lady Edith's memory, of Mr. Talbot, seated in the carriage beside Allan as they drove off. The gleam of satisfaction which lighted up his dark sinister eye, when the carriage-wheels were grinding along the gravel, seemed at best exceedingly insidious, and made her heart sink with almost unaccountable misgivings; but her attention was soon painfully engrossed by Beatrice, as she sank down breathless and senseless on the floor when the carriage finally disappeared.

It was time next day for Lady Edith to attend to herself, always the last person to occupy her own thoughts. Hitherto she had felt as if living and acting, ever since the death of Sir Evan, in a bewildered dream. The past seemed even now in Lady Edith's mind to have been like that kingly form once discovered in an Etruscan tomb, which retained undiminished brightness and splendour, till at length a breath of air touched it and the whole crumbled into dust. Even Lady Edith's feelings, sublimed as they were by religious submission, became overawed and agitated as she contem-

plazed the solemn march of time, which must carry her on through scenes of discipline and sorrow, till her lonely heart should be at rest in the grave; and folding the sympathising Beatrice to her heart, she burst into tears, saying, in accents of solemn affection, "My very dear girl, you are my only earthly comfort now, my only tie to life. Let us be all in all to each other, in the dear cottage-home which Evan so generously left me. I need such affection as yours, and I know it will never fail me!"

"Never! oh never," sobbed Beatrice, in a tone of fervent emotion. "My only idea of life or happiness is to be with you, to share all your duties and all your sorrows with grateful affection, and to owe my having a home, as I always did, to your kindness."

"You give me sunshine for shadow, Beatrice, and whatever I have done for you was more than repaid long ago by the happiness you caused me. For your sake I could wish to live and even try to be cheerful. There can be no greater instance of presumptuous discontent than to wish impatiently for death, and while our lives are continued, there must be work for us both to do, or discipline for us both to suffer. If affliction be indeed the cement necessary to unite every Christian virtue together, we must not shrink from whatever shall build up our Christian character into symmetry and order."

Lady Edith having thus roused herself to meet the mournful emergency of her altered circumstances, prepared to leave Cairngorum Castle, though it seemed literally like tearing herself up by the root to go. For the last time she took leave of all the animate and inanimate objects which had so long been a part of her happy home, and, hand in hand with Beatrice, went slowly through every much-loved room, now to be forsaken, perhaps for ever. Each picture, each ornament, even each article of ordinary furniture was dear to the heart of both, as they thought of the familiar faces and familiar voices once associated with them, but now to be seen or heard there no more. Beatrice plucked for the last time some flowers and cut some slips from the plants which Sir Evan had once delighted to rear, and they seemed like precious gifts from nature in memory of one so beloved. Many a day afterwards the lovely girl affectionately cherished those memorials, which she carefully planted and tenderly reared.

Lady Edith gave one last long look behind ere she departed from Sir Evan's favourite sitting-room in the dear old home, where, in all probability, not a door would hereafter creak upon its hinges for years, and one single tear slowly descended like molten lead over her pallid cheek. She was followed by Beatrice in all the convulsive agony of a first sorrow, and by old McRonald, silent as the tomb, in his livid stern heart-broken grief, while his tall soldier-like figure seemed already shrunk to half its former dimensions, and the step that had once led on the forlorn hope at Bergen-op-Zoom was now feeble and slow.

When all the other attendants at Cairngerum Castle had been paid off, this faithful old servant applied to Lady Edith with the most fervent entreaty that he might remain in her house. "I cannot live away from those that loved him who is no more," said he in a low tone of mournful respect, and drawing his hard weather-beaten hand roughly across his eyes, drenched with tears; "my master's memory is all in all to me, and if the last drop of my blood could serve those he loved, it should be spilled like water."

"McRonald," said Lady Edith, with deep emotion, "it would be a comfort to me certainly that one who so loved his master should spend the decline of an enterprising and honourable life in my home, but it must be a very different home now, and a very different establishment."

"Madam, I would do the work of a page in buttons, and take no more than the salary given to a boy of all-work with thankfulness—my pension makes me easy about money—but to leave the family is impossible," replied the old man earnestly; "you might give me warning twenty times before I would take it; keep me, then, and I shall be such a servant, heart and soul, as you could not find in the wide world again."

Lady Edith looked mournfully at the dejected old warrior, once so powerful, and now apparently crumbling into ruin. He seemed to her like a shattered wreck which the crew had abandoned to drift along the dark wave of time alone. She remembered with a sigh how lately Sir Evan had smilingly remarked, that McRonald, if left to his own devices, would be as helpless as the conjuror who could devour any quantity of fire, but never could get bread to eat, and she felt that to give him shelter and to give him work for his few remaining years might alone render to him the dregs of life endurable.

The old soldier had but one domestic tie in life, and that was to Bessie McRonald, the beautiful daughter of a deceased brother; therefore he watched with secret gratification the growing attachment between her and Robert Carre, whom he considered the model young farmer of the neighbourhood, and whose straightforward integrity of purpose he could not doubt, nor the permanent happiness of any girl to whom he became attached. In the depths of his grief, old McRonald was affectionately visited by his lovely young niece, and it was an interesting contrast to observe the weather-beaten soldier, hard in appearance as a block of granite, and the bright village-beauty, with health glowing in her rosy cheeks, in her pouting scarlet lips, in her redundant glossy hair, and in her sparkling blue eyes, which looked archly out from the Highland plaid, gracefully thrown over her head and gathered in folds over her gingham gown. She generally carried a bunch of newly-plucked flowers in one hand, and her step as she approached her kind old uncle, was invariably buoyant with hope and happiness.

From the hour when Lady Edith sorrowfully removed to Hea-

therbrae, and after the long lapse of time during which she once more gathered round her a ring of human affections and sympathies, McDonald continued a perfect *multum in parvo* of usefulness, devoted to her service. He was quite a self-contained establishment in the cottage of Heatherbrae, being footman, gardener, message-boy, carpenter, and above all, the soberest butler who ever drew a cork. Lady Edith was not one of those who baptize idleness and call it resignation, but she resolved to do the will of God as well as to support it.

Instead of sinking, as she would naturally have done, into a waveless calm of dumb despair, the venerable Lady Edith, for the sake of others, clung to the shattered wreck of life, that she might still find rest to her own wounded spirit in consoling others, and her voice was the last that sounded words of sympathy or support in many a dying ear; and over every recent grave in the village churchyard Lady Edith and Beatrice might drop a tear of recollection for the sufferings they had personally alleviated, themselves consoled by the thought that many a grateful prayer, from many a suffering death-bed, was registered on their behalf in the records of heaven.

The mystery attached to the origin of Beatrice caused much romantic speculation among the younger portion of Lady Edith's visitors in the upper classes, and it might have amusingly occupied a month's reading in any circulating library to hear all the various versions confidentially whispered, and implicitly believed in the house, of her origin and history, while some of the more imaginative young ladies almost envied her so romantic a story. To Beatrice herself, the mystery of her origin became a source of more and more painful perplexity, because in various ways it appeared that she was the object of secret observation to some unknown friends. Books of a Popish tendency continued from time to time to be sent to her anonymously, and from the moment when Lady Edith became her sole guardian, there were continual attempts made on the part of Father Eustace to renew clandestinely the intimacy he had made with her secretly in her childhood.

Beatrice felt herself followed and watched often in her walks, and though she never once encountered the priest when with Lady Edith, yet she seemed never to stroll beyond her usual bounds alone without been greeted by the bland smile and insinuating voice of Father Eustace, whose assiduous civilities she returned with graceful, but very distant politeness; yet deep within her young heart grew a continually haunting perplexity as to what could cause her to be of the smallest importance to the confessor of Lord Eaglescairn. It was not in nature for a young, clever and imaginative girl like Beatrice, not to nourish, under such circumstances, a few natural hopes, a few sanguine castles in the air, that she might yet be acknowledged by some affectionate mother or dis-

tinguished father; and every day she felt a more longing desire to have some known as well as unknown relatives.

For some weeks after Allan's departure, his letters, which were long and numerous, continued incessantly to pour in at Heatherbrae, and many a day did Beatrice, accompanied by Lady Edith hasten to meet the postman, that they might accelerate the chief event and greatest pleasure of their day, in reading all he said by their cheerful fireside together, and together admire the spirit of ardent enjoyment with which his ready pen recorded all his entertaining adventures so entertainingly described.

The news at length reached Heatherbrae, in a few lines written at Allan's request by the *soidisant* Mr. Talbot, now acknowledged as his uncle Mr. Ambrose, that Sir Robert, never having recovered from a *coup de soleil* which struck him in India, had very suddenly expired, and Allan was now therefore unexpectedly plunged in a sea of business, as well as into a new cause of most heartfelt sorrow. It seemed to Lady Edith from this moment, as if the death of his father had affected the spirits of Allan to a degree scarcely accountable, considering how little they had ever met. His letters from henceforth became every day more rare as well as more melancholy, and even his handwriting, bold and beautiful as it had once been, grew careless, hurried, and almost illegible. In the last that reached Heatherbrae he complained of being ill, and after that, months passed away, but not a line appeared. Every night Lady Edith and Beatrice promised each other one in the morning, but every morning brought only disappointment, for the postman seemed to have forgotten his way to the house.

The sorrowful suspense and anxiety of Beatrice became gradually visible in her aspect. The bright smile on her lip became dimmed, the bloom retreated from her cheek, her step lost some of its buoyant elasticity, and her fine rich voice took a sadder tone. But her long suspense was greatly relieved by the entire sympathy of Lady Edith, who well knew all her feelings and right-minded affections; therefore they spoke without reserve, discussing every vicissitude of thought that occurred to either on the subject. The ideas of both recoiled from any suspicion that prosperity and independence could so change Allan as to make him heartlessly forget old feelings and old friends. "I cannot guess how Allan is situated," said Beatrice to Lady Edith; "but we know how he feels. Oh, he cannot already have forsaken us!"

When Lady Edith looked at that lovely face, she felt that it was impossible. The smile of Beatrice, her voice, her expression, her grace of manner, were never to be eclipsed in the memory of any one who had once beheld her; but why did Sir Allan not write? It was inconceivable. She had heard of letters being intercepted; could his be so? The conjecture was too romantic and too absurd, she thought, for an old woman's brain to conceive; and yet Mr. Talbot was his companion, or rather "Father

Ambrose"—a Jesuit; and what limits are there to the manœuvres which are allowable, or even laudable, to compass the ends of a Jesuit, when the end sanctifies any means?

CHAPTER XI.

"One who meriteth esteem, need never lack a friend."

Proverbial Philosophy.

THOSE who are unhappy at home seldom render themselves respected abroad; therefore Lord and Lady Eaglescairn were liked neither by their neighbours at Clanmarina nor by each other. A life of twenty years' wrangling had not improved the temper of either; and none but those who have lived in the house with near connexions disliking each other can conceive the mutual wretchedness they inflicted. Lady Eaglescairn lived in the belief that she was herself seraphically amiable; and one way in which she kept up this self-delusion was by going over in her own mind all the injuries she might have inflicted upon people, had she chosen—how she might have prevented this person from visiting Lady Edith, or given another a false impression against her—but since she did not, she was therefore to be admired as the best of human beings, though Lord Eaglescairn privately expressed his opinion that she had no more feeling nor sensibility than her work-box.

Lord Eaglescairn was a man who could not bear to be alone. Not merely did he avoid being alone for an hour, but even for a minute; therefore he tolerated his wife's tediousness rather than his own gloom. His only object in life, apparently, was to escape from himself, especially of late years, when he seemed evidently to have some secret care incessantly preying on his mind and spirits. No man ever disliked his own society so much as Lord Eaglescairn; and as constantly as his shadow followed him in the sunshine did Father Eustace appear in his wake wherever they went, watching over him and actually herding him with unwinking watchfulness. Early every morning Lord Eaglescairn was walking rapidly on his beautiful terraces, and the priest accompanied him there, in evidently close and earnest conference. He came home to breakfast, talking to his confessor in low, confidential accents generally, and all day his voice might be heard afterwards in conversation with any of his guests who were nearest,—sometimes, if no one else could be got, with Lady Eaglescairn, or even with his servants, rather than with nobody.

It was generally known among all Lord Eaglescairn's intimate associates, that he hated to hear the same subjects often referred to, particularly when of a melancholy nature; and as he was always

running away from death, by avoiding all conversation about it, and taking the most anxious care of his health, it was very soon understood that he considered the melancholy catastrophe at Cairngorum Castle to be worn completely threadbare. Still there were continual little traits about Lady Edith transpiring in the village and neighbourhood, which showed the beautiful outline of a character almost perfected by suffering; and to these, when discussed by Lady Eaglescain and her circle one morning at breakfast, Lord Eaglescain listened with angry as well as with wearied impatience.

"I am sure," he exclaimed peevishly, about the third time that her name had been alluded to, thrusting back his plate with the remains of muffins and egg-shells, and vehemently stirring his second cup of chocolate, "nothing is ever mentioned in this house now but Lady Edith Tremorne. I hear of her in every room I enter. It is really torturing to talk of the same person continually. One might fancy there was not another woman in existence. I wish either she or I were out of the world; and indeed, if those windows are to be left open in this easterly wind, my time in this life cannot be long."

"So you often say on other occasions," replied Lady Eaglescain, yawning. "You are like the creaking door, always complaining. You are always threatening to die! Do, pray, name your day, and keep to it; there is nothing so trying to me as suspense!"

"Lady Edith seems to do good of every sort to every person," said Lady Stratharden, the Protestant sister-in-law of Lady Eaglescain, courageously resolved to assert her privilege of saying what she pleased. "She and I were at school together once, and she was our model girl. One would fancy her heart must be too large for her income now, she is so extensively charitable."

"Well," replied Lady Eaglescain, who was a great skeptic as to the goodness of people's motives, "she has her reward. How the people at Clanmarina do reverence her! I would die to-morrow to feel assured that such tears shall be shed over my grave as over poor Sir Evan's, and that I should be as much missed."

"Your parrot will miss you sadly," observed Lord Eaglescain, with contemptuous bitterness, "and the old poodle would be inconsolable."

"Yes," replied Lady Eaglescain, thoughtfully. "But I scarcely possess a friend who would value my parrot and poodle the more for their having belonged to me."

"Money," said Lady Stratharden, "can buy everything but friendship; and so many interesting traits of your neighbours at Heatherbrae are reported to me, that I have often lately felt a wish to renew my girlish intimacy with that best of human beings, and to re-cultivate Lady Edith's acquaintance. We were formerly inseparable together. I am resolved to claim our old friendship again, for I am sure that Lady Edith would learn anything sooner than she could learn to forget an old friend."

"She never seemed anxious to be cultivated by us, and formerly evaded all our advances," replied Lady Eaglescairn, haughtily. "If people surround themselves with icebergs, I am not a Sir John Franklin that would attempt to force the barrier."

"That beautiful anonymous foundling interests me beyond measure," added Lady Stratharden, more eagerly than her listless nature often prompted her to speak. "I never saw any girl whose appearance is more perfectly engaging; and I am told she understands every subject, from Watts on the Mind, to Vestris on the Toe. Who can she be? I shall never rest till we find out!"

"Do not waste your time in trying to see further into a mill-stone than the nature of the mill-stone will admit," replied Lord Eaglescairn, sternly, and the colour rushed into his face as he spoke. "The girl is evidently nobody, or she would have been claimed long ago. I always hate people that I have known by sight a long time without becoming acquainted with them; and I particularly detest that unknown *protegée* of Lady Edith's, who seems always in my way. I hate them both."

"Well! you have often tried in vain to become acquainted with them, and disappointed people should use angry words when it is any relief to them," answered Lady Eaglescairn, satirically. "If our son were at home, I really should hate the sight of her, on account of the danger to him; but as he is safe in Rome, do tell me, Lady Stratharden, how could I get acquainted with Lady Edith and her *protegée*?"

"Nothing easier," replied Lord Eaglescairn, yawningly turning his damp newspaper; but at the same time it was obvious that the allusion to Beatrice had excited in him some peculiar interest. "Desire the ponies to upset you to-morrow before that porch with the mantle of roses over it; or write to Heatherbrae that you are an old woman with the typhus fever, in want of a night's lodging."

"The cottage at present is closed up, as if in a state of blockade," observed Father Eustace, in a tone of unusual interest. "But that young girl's parents having belonged certainly to our church, she has been most unfairly shut out from my influence. We must endeavour to remedy this. It is sad to see so promising a young person in such hands! it is lamentable!"

Lord Eaglescairn looked earnestly for several moments at Father Eustace, and making a sign for him to follow, by a silent glance towards the door, thoughtfully left the room, and was afterwards closeted with his confessor for some hours. The result of a very long and agitated conference with Father Eustace was, that he wrote a letter desiring his son, Lord Iona, with all convenient despatch, to return home for the shooting-season to Eaglescairn Castle, as he had some business of consequence to discuss with him.

Lady Eaglescairn, while praying in a language she did not understand, and vainly seeking peace in a religion of images, pictures, music, and perfumes, sometimes casually meditated, whether all

the external work of ceaseless genuflections, bowings, and crossings, could be an equivalent for that pure and simple devotion of the heart to God, which shone in the whole conduct and character of Lady Edith. Many a trait of her extraordinary usefulness became accidentally reported to Lady Eaglescairn's circle of guests, and no argument is so calculated to gain the devoted adherents of superstition from their empty dreams as an exhibition of some one exemplary Christian, living visibly and intelligibly for that life which is beyond life.

Lady Stratharden, in the meanwhile, found her way in person to call at Heatherbrae, and who that ever saw Lady Edith would not have admired, as Lady Stratharden irresistibly did, the dignified sorrow with which that active and devoted Christian gathered up all her remaining strength, to finish, with crippled resources and broken spirits, those many useful objects which had so long prospered under Sir Evan's care.

The little that Lady Edith now possessed was so judiciously as well as so kindly distributed, for the encouragement of cheerful, comfortable activity, that the humble well-taught Christians, seeing their benefactress still doing her utmost, and almost beyond it, on their behalf, felt grateful for what she would have done, as well as for what she could accomplish; while the sceptre of her influence over the village and clansmen at Clanmarina was that of unbounded attachment and respect.

To Lady Edith's congenial nature, the simply expressed affection of the virtuous poor was inexpressibly soothing. She had a friendly word or a ready observation for all those she passed, while every clansman touched his bonnet, and the boys pulled their forelocks to testify their respect. The good wives hurried from their spinning if Lady Edith came in sight, or left their tea untasted, to stand at the door and drop a rustic curtsy to the friend of all who needed one; and the village girls, who stole like frightened deer past the magnificent equipage of Lady Eaglescairn, never omitted their shy smiling welcome to "The ledy of Heatherbrae."

CHAPTER XII.

"Oh! qu'il arrive d'étranges choses dans les voyages;
et qu'il serait bien plus sage de rester chez soi!"

VOLTAIRE.

LADY EDITH felt a daily increasing anxiety respecting Allan's long silence, preceded as it had been by a tone of depression in his letters, a hopelessness even in the consolations of religion itself, so utterly desponding, that she felt it painfully unaccountable. Any

thing her kind heart could have borne, inured as she was to suffering, that concerned only herself, but there was a nervous agitation which excited her deepest sympathy in the manner of Beatrice now which showed how deeply she felt the long suspense, as week after week passed heavily on and no letter from Sir Allan appeared. "The heart of a young man," thought Lady Edith, anxiously, "is a strange enigma, and though I believed that Allan would be a model of constancy in his attachments, yet who ever is constant to his first love?—how soon he learns to consider it a mere boyish freak, perhaps to be laughed at and forgotten! There are many girls abroad so artful and alluring that I must not wonder if Allan has been fickle, and the love Beatrice felt for him was always that of a sister; therefore, much as she feels this change in Allan, I see that her sorrow is but such as my own, a sorrow that saddens the heart, but does not break it."

A character so energetic as Lady Edith's was not likely to sit with folded hands and downcast eyes, wondering what would happen next, but she at length enclosed a letter to Lady Stratharden, at Rome, requesting her to see Sir Allan personally, and to ascertain, if possible, the cause of his long silence, as well as of his evidently increasing melancholy. The answer she received filled her with surprise and perplexity, by informing her that it had been quite out of the question for any one to see Sir Allan, as he was in very broken health, and exclusively attended by his mother, and by Mr. and Miss Ambrose, his uncle and aunt, who devoted themselves without ceasing to his society. Lady Stratharden added, that her own endeavours to see Sir Allan being so persevering, Lady McAlpine had favoured her with a few lines, which she now enclosed, as being most characteristic of her mind, frivolous, superficial, and ignorant in the extreme. It was as follows:—

"DEAR LADY STRATHARDEN,—During my son's precarious state of health and spirits, produced by successive family bereavements, his uncle has deemed it best to suppress all visits, such as yours, or letters such as Lady Edith's, that might awaken old remembrances and painful associations. Till the hour of his majority, it is the intention of my brother and myself, being his guardians, to keep Allan at Rome, where, in conformity with his father's injunction, that my brother and I shall forfeit the guardianship unless he be educated a Protestant, Mr. Ambrose has secured him a 'strictly Protestant' tutor, recommended by our excellent and most liberal-minded friend, Cardinal Albertini, to whom Lord Eaglescain kindly introduced me. Allan does not yet confide in his new tutor so entirely as I could wish, thus rendering it essential that my brother should break off all those old influences which might prevent our gaining an increased influence over the scarcely yet formed opinions of Sir Allan. It is astonishing how very open to conviction I find our good worthy Cardinal, but he says I have a singular genius for

logic! I have very nearly brought him round on the subject of confession, though, truth to say, he has more to advance in its favour than you can have any conception of. Allan does not like our disputations, but I make a point of his being present, that the Cardinal may have this opportunity to say many things very impressive to a young intellect. I perfectly understand my ground, and our excellent Cardinal says he has met with no other Protestant who never goes beyond her depth, and who has so clearly discriminated between where liberality is cherished, or bigotry is to be avoided. A list is kept at the College here of those English persons who are thought likely to apostatize; and an officious friend informed me lately that my name and Sir Allan's have been recently added. Fancy how absurd! During service in the churches here, no one seems at all impressed except the new converts, who make themselves very absurd about the images and processions; I am told even the Pope himself is astonished to see his own religion acted out in a way it never was before. The bodily attitudes of the Italian people are devout enough, but they are whispering and giggling during most of these pompous representations, not being more intellectually impressed than at a theatre. Still when one sees 600 wax candles blazing on an altar, thousands kneeling before the Pope, and the attendants fanning his Holiness with peacocks' feathers, it really is most affecting. Cardinal Albertini has kindly given me a tooth of St. Apollonia, blessed by the Pope, which is said to cure the toothache more infallibly than Holloway's Elixir; but he was rather annoyed at my comparing the Popish austerities to those we saw formerly among the Hindoos. I shall let you know from time to time what progress I make in converting my agreeable visitor, the dear Cardinal; and here he comes in his scarlet hat, stockings, and gloves!"

A month afterwards, Lady McAlpine and her sister, Miss Ambrose, were publicly received into the Romish communion, as trophies of Cardinal Albertini's extraordinary skill in making converts; and Lady Edith, when she perused the letter from Lady Stratharden, which conveyed this intelligence, sat for above an hour contemplating it in deep thought and very deep perplexity, before she communicated the intelligence to Beatrice.

Lady Edith and Beatrice could only unite their prayers, mingled with many bitter tears, for Allan, imploring on his behalf that the grief of losing so many near relatives, the enfeebled state of his health, and the estrangement from all Protestant society, might not too much increase the influence of his Popish relatives; that he might remember the teaching and example of his uncle, as well as the faith of his earlier years, and that his happiness here and hereafter might not be shipwrecked by the machinations of those who would confiscate to their idolatrous church his whole future fortune, his personal liberty, and his privilege to act or think according to the dictates of

a divinely given conscience. It is no easy task to make the best of a bad business, and Beatrice found the task a hard one now; for her heart was not of adamant; and she suffered deeply.

Prayer had always a bracing effect on the mind of Lady Edith, and no earthly perplexities could annihilate that pious hopefulness which yet shone through the long dark vista of futurity, gilding the prospect with an almost certain assurance that Allan would eventually be rescued from the fiery trial to which the carefully instilled principles of his boyhood must now be inevitably exposed.

In educating her young *protégée*, Lady Edith had taught her to make the most of her intellect, to know nothing by halves, to enjoy intelligent conversation, to delight in all her duties; and though often harassed with perplexity as to her own origin, and by various circumstances which from time to time renewed her hopes of its being at last revealed to her, this only the more rapidly matured her mind, while she felt cheerfully prepared to meet and make the best of whatever emergencies or changes such a disclosure might hereafter involve, by acting always under the advice of her best of friends, Lady Edith. It had become more and more evident, ever since Sir Evan's death, that some one person at least took a keen interest in Beatrice, as several letters were addressed to her subsequently in the same well-known handwriting, which had formerly addressed some Popish tracts to her during Sir Evan's lifetime. The same invariable subject filled all these communications,—an exhortation to conceal them from Lady Edith, which Beatrice never did, and an earnest entreaty that she should prepare to join the Romish Church, which would be the means of restoring a long-lost child to her unknown relatives, and of placing Beatrice in a position of dignity and affluence beyond her utmost hopes.

A circumstance occurred to Beatrice soon after the reception of the last letter she received from this anonymous correspondent, which showed that the newly awakened activity of those incognito friends was not always to remain limited to written intercourse, but that means could be found, by the manœuvres of a Popish emissary, to elude the vigilance of those who watch most carefully over the young, and even to deceive the young themselves as to the character and objects of those with whom they associate. But the incidents which brought out this discovery remain to be told hereafter.

Beatrice was busily engaged one evening at her favourite amusement, working among the flower-beds, and attended by her superb Italian grey-hound, "Schako" by name. She was dressed in a broad-brimmed hat of the wide-awake species, decorated with a wreath of her own favourite white jessamine mingled with ivy leaves, and her pretty picturesque velvet jacket hung gracefully over a skirt of Rob-Roy tartan. The whole effect was pleasing as one of Gainsborough's beautiful pictures, and while Beatrice continued hoeing the box-wood borders, tying up the carnations, and humming some familiar airs, she looked the very image of rural happiness. No

stranger by any accident ever passed that way ; but a new gardener whom she did not know by sight had been engaged for Lady Edith at Inverness, and seeing a young man whom she supposed of course to be Lady Edith's new factotum leaning on the gate, as if about to enter, she made him a good-humoured signal to bring the watering-pot, and to afford her his assistance in completing her work, which accordingly he did with the utmost alacrity. Beatrice thought this a good introduction of the stranger to his labours ; but never was there so awkward a gardener in the world, though he appeared undoubtedly, in spite of hob-nailed shoes, and the strangest of deformed hats, a very graceful young man. At length a dark suspicion suddenly crossed the mind of Beatrice, that she must have made some unaccountable mistake. Her assistant evidently could not distinguish between vegetables, fruit, and flowers ; but seemed equally ready to dig them all up by the roots promiscuously. He was politeness itself to Beatrice, but there was an air of aristocracy about him not to be mistaken, so that Beatrice felt at a loss what to say, whether to ask him at once who he was, or how to dismiss him without giving offence to one who had entered by her own heedless invitation. She at length laughingly whispered her perplexity to Lady Edith, who had wandered out, leaning on her gold-headed cane, to enjoy her lovely flowers and quiet garden. Lady Edith gave a hurried glance at the stranger, and, convinced that, in spite of his wearing a very weather-beaten shooting dress, and acting the part that Beatrice had assigned him of being the new gardener, he was not only a gentleman, but one of no ordinary calibre, she said to him in a tone of quiet humour, " We shall attend to the flower-beds ourselves for some days now that they are all in bloom ; but if you want work I have a large potato field about a mile off, which you may be so obliging as to go and dig up for me."

The young volunteer, with a sly laugh to Beatrice at being so evidently detected, bowed himself off, threw a somerset over the gate, and with a step full of gay hilarity disappeared among the neighbouring copse-wood. Thence the sound of several shots during the day, and the noise of dogs and men, indicated his presence till the twilight closed in darkness, and several sportsmen, after a successful day's enterprise, dispersed to their homes. Then the young stranger accidentally passed a cottage door, from which Lady Edith and Beatrice were emerging, and paused for a moment respectfully, till having smilingly glanced at the large parish-baskets carried by the two ladies, he with a matter of course air escorted them home, amusing the two ladies by the oddity and originality of his remarks.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Behind the clouds is the sun still shining,
 Thy fate is the common fate of all:
 Into each life some rain must fall,
 Some days must be dark and dreary."—LONGFELLOW.

NOTHING could be more pitiable than the mental starvation of the half-naked children under Lord Eaglescairn's popish domination. They were instructed in nothing but to pay their utmost reverence and also their uttermost farthing to Father Eustace, who gave them in return his own absolution and a Latin benediction. Mr. Clinton, on the contrary, instead of taking a penny from the starving man, gave his whole time and his little income freely among those whom he could benefit, and Lady Edith, finding the old schoolmistress superannuated, advertised for one competent to instruct the already well-instructed children of her own school.

Scarcely had the vacancy at Clanmarina school been announced, before a candidate arrived one morning in person at Heatherbrae to present her testimonials, when Lady Edith and Beatrice were sitting at work together.

"My Lady!" said McDonald, entering with rather a portentous look, "a person is below,—a sort of half-and-half gentlewoman, not exactly a lady, nor not a common body either, who wants to take the school!"

Lady Edith, secretly amused at McDonald's evident perplexity, and guessing that it was a schoolmistress with whose system and testimonials Mr. Clinton had been perfectly satisfied, and whom he had sent to her as being admirably competent to the vacant situation, desired him to show the stranger up. Mrs. Lorraine, as she caused herself to be announced, had a sort of poor-relation look, and might be about thirty, with great remains of beauty, but her countenance appeared singularly destitute of expression. Lady Edith, who could in general draw ideas out of a stone statue, found herself completely baffled by the peculiar reserve of Mrs. Lorraine's manner. She was slow in speech, very sententious, and very firm in manner; precise and orderly in all she said; but her eyes were fixed so immoveably on the ground that she never once looked up. Her voice when she spoke was in one unalterable tone, measured, slow, and monotonous, as if she were reading her answers from some invisible book, and the chief characteristic of her whole appearance as well as of her manner was that of impenetrable calmness.

Mrs. Lorraine unhesitatingly undertook whatever duties Lady Edith proposed, made no difficulties, started no objections, discovered no surprise, but seemed made up of complaisance, and most composedly resolute to take the situation, good or bad, with or

without a salary. So acquiescingly did Mrs. Lorraine receive every proposition of Lady Edith's, that Beatrice afterwards laughingly said, "the new schoolmistress seems a person equally ready to become a Duchess, or to sweep a crossing!"

"That would be quite in the Jesuit school!" replied Lady Edith somewhat anxiously. "A prince to-day and a beggar or a tutor to-morrow, their lives are a mere masquerade, in which, when desired, they act what they are not, and say what they do not think. Somehow I cannot like that complaisant woman, and yet I cannot make any rational objection to her!"

"We could not exactly dismiss poor Mrs. Lorraine for being too well pleased with everything, and too ready to undertake anything," observed Beatrice, slyly smiling over her drawing. "But positively, if you had asked her to teach Hindostanee, or to wear a mask, she would have looked neither surprised nor unwilling."

"She is just a living image of acquiescence," added Lady Edith musingly. "Her only object is, as the poet recommends, 'to scatter smiles on this uneasy earth!'"

Lady Edith, being incapable of caprice, and apt to believe every human being as honest-hearted as herself, now sat down to examine an enormous packet of testimonials which she had received, from the unexpected candidate for office, rather unwillingly. As she carefully read them all, a presentiment of evil forced itself gradually on her mind, and every panegyric on Mrs. Lorraine appeared most unaccountably to increase her irresistible antipathy to the object of so much praise; yet she was determined not to be unjust, and as so very superior a person, reduced to poverty, seemed anxious for the situation, it would be wrong not at least to try her merits. Never were there such characters! The Honourable Mrs. Seymour said that she envied any one who could secure the services of such a perfect treasure; Lady Sophia Crumpton had been most desirous to engage Mrs. Lorraine for her own children, as she had never known her equal, and the Dowager Lady de Vere wished she could be young again herself to benefit by the instructions of the most admirable of teachers.

Lady Edith felt that there was no escape! Who could deny that she wanted an experienced teacher for her school, and that one had immediately appeared, irresistibly suited to the situation; but what earthly advantage could Mrs. Lorraine propose to herself by accepting an office the reverse of a sinecure, being labour with scarcely any salary? It seemed almost undeniably a mystery!

When Mrs. Lorraine returned to receive her final answer, Lady Edith was anew perplexed at observing an air of distinction about her, even in the shabbiest mourning, quite inconsistent with the apparent humility of her position, and even a degree of stateliness broke out through the cloud of her reserve that was totally unaccountable, while she looked as if there were a great deal in her, though nothing came out. Mrs. Lorraine's delicate hands, her

small, beautifully-proportioned feet, her aristocratic profile, the short upper lip, compressed with a look of singular determination, the jet-black eyebrows, and the eyes veiled beneath the very longest and darkest of eye-lashes, all gave a dignity to her aspect, strangely contrasted with the humility of her conversation and the poverty of her appearance.

Once only, for a moment, Mrs. Lorraine's eyes flashed like lightning round the room, and became fixed on the lovely countenance of Beatrice, bent over her painting; but the fire was instantly quenched, before it could be observed, and she kept them demurely on the ground, while more and more puzzling Lady Edith by the ingenious round-aboutness of her answers, and by the extreme earnestness of her desire to be engaged.

"How did you hear," asked Lady Edith, in a tone of gentle politeness, "that my school is vacant?"

"I have friends everywhere," answered Mrs. Lorraine, evasively. "My determination to be useful will enable me, I trust, to do much real good in Clanmarina. I have no earthly object, but to fulfil my duty."

"Pray," inquired Lady Edith, vainly conjecturing in what higher position she might have been, as the wife perhaps of an officer or a clergyman, "are you a widow?"

"I have no worldly tie remaining," replied Mrs. Lorraine, in a quiet tone of sad civility and of passive resignation, while she seemed to wipe away a tear with her handkerchief; "I am like a stray weed, tossed on the ocean of life, uncaring, and uncared for! Try me in your school, Madam, and you shall find me neither deficient in zeal, nor, allow me to add, from long experience, in ability."

Beatrice clandestinely fixed her all-observant eyes on Mrs. Lorraine, who delivered herself of a deep sigh. "If her character is as upright as her person, she ought to do!" thought the young girl, greatly amused at the interview, in which the frozen reserve of the stranger's manner, and the colourless countenance utterly destitute of expression, formed a striking contrast to the cordial frankness of Lady Edith, whose soul was in her eyes, while she always spoke her whole mind as if living in the Palace of Truth. The striking difference in the words, looks, and dispositions of these two individuals seemed now printed on the senses of Beatrice, and remained engraven on her memory for ever.

"I know," continued Mrs. Lorraine, "that it is an arduous situation, but the labour is no obstacle, nor is the salary any inducement. I want employment, and have no other want. Let us only hope that I may find strength for all that it is my intention to do here!"

"But," replied Lady Edith, almost startled at the earnestness of Mrs. Lorraine's manner, "the sphere of your duties is a very small one."

"I shall soon enlarge it," answered Mrs. Lorraine, with a dark smile, and in a tone of almost haughty self-complacency; "people who are truly zealous can open extended horizons for themselves."

Lady Edith secretly debated with herself whether she ought to take alarm at this threat of such excessive activity, which seemed in so limited a neighbourhood to be as out of place as a storm in a tea-cup, but prudence conquered, and she made no commentary on a speech which she did not, however, very much like, or ever forget.

It was a cheering sight when the Clanmarina children, boys and girls, were assembled under the old elm-tree in Lady Edith's garden to have tea in honour of their new schoolmistress. When the joyous clatter of cups and the noisy hubbub of voices had ceased, the pupils stood in two rows like living walls, and sung a hymn, which sounded from their tiny but well-taught voices like an Æolian harp, while their bright, intelligent faces looked full of juvenile happiness and intellectual vivacity. Mrs. Lorraine placed herself before them with downcast eyes beside Lady Edith, who could not but utter her feelings in a tone of benevolent enthusiasm, when she said, "The noblest felicity permitted to human beings on earth, is when we are enabled to lead, not the mere bodies, but the souls of our fellow-creatures from evil to good. No occupation is so worthy of an immortal nature, as to care for the immortal destiny of others."

A dark cloud overshadowed the countenance of Mrs. Lorraine at these words, and her lip became strongly compressed; she made no audible reply, but dropped her veil over her face; while now, by Lady Edith's desire, the pupils repeated verse by verse several chapters of the Gospels and Epistles.

Among those who chiefly excelled in memory was the pretty Bessie McDonald, now nearly grown up, and no one could look on such a face as hers without wishing her well; but sometimes the vividness of her fancy, and the extreme excitability of her imagination, had been a source of anxious thought to Lady Edith; she therefore pointed the interesting young girl out to Mrs. Lorraine, as one who both deserved and required peculiar circumspection by training her to curb a too poetical and imaginative tendency, and to keep her in the safe line of Scriptural teaching.

"I like to contend with difficulties," replied Mrs. Lorraine, in a tone of all-comprehensive benevolence, and fixing her eyes on Bessie, whose high precipitous marble forehead was indicative of no ordinary mind, while her complexion, all lilies and roses, and her features, all dimples and smiles, were lovely to look on; "that girl shall be my peculiar care."

"A more pleasing one could scarcely be found," added Beatrice warmly, "every door in Clanmarina opens of itself to that very sweet face. On her way home from school, Bessie drops into every cottage where there is sickness, and reads any invalid a chapter of the Bible, helps to wash the children, to bake their cakes, or to cook the family broth; and poor as Bessie is, she has her pensioners, for whom she saves all her hard-earned halfpence. There is a sort of ragged elegance about her, extremely picturesque, and Robert Carro

nas lent Bessie a donkey on which she rides about now as happy as a little Amazon queen!"

"Or rather, the Queen of the Fairies," observed Lady Edith, while Mrs. Lorraine listened with a strange sinister smile of sarcastic incredulity that puzzled Beatrice, who had never seen the smile of a schoolmistress before, and wondered what it meant now. "Bessie is so feminine, so gentle, but with an imagination so poetical, that she is just suited for what I think she will hereafter be, the wife of my favourite *protégé*, the cleverest and best young man in Clanmarina, Robert Carre."



CHAPTER XIV.

"Oh! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive."—SCOTT.

BEATRICE had a delight scarcely to be equalled, in pleasant intellectual conversation; and from the time of Mrs. Lorraine being settled at Clanmarina, the new schoolmistress most ingeniously contrived opportunities and incidents which brought her into private confidential intercourse with Lady Edith's young *protégée*, to the apparently accidental exclusion of Lady Edith herself. Long intimacy alone could have accounted for the excessive partiality professed for the society of Miss Farinelli, by one who seemed to shun all others with very chilling indifference. Mrs. Lorraine was evidently of the select species, and Beatrice herself felt not only flattered, but very much astonished at the almost enthusiastic attachment testified towards her by "that frozen iceberg," as Mrs. Clinton called Mrs. Lorraine, after several days spent in a fruitless endeavour to have some congenial intercourse.

"We need not build an ice-house now," said Lady Edith, smiling; "Gunter himself could not desire a better freezing apparatus than Mrs. Lorraine!"

After having, with insidious perseverance, twined herself apparently into the confidence of Beatrice, Mrs. Lorraine at length began to exchange the general expressions of attachment with which she had at first met her young favourite, for hints, becoming daily more distinct, that there existed certain secrets of importance, with which she was entrusted, relating to the most charming young girl on earth, but only to be revealed on certain conditions. She added that wealth, friends, relatives, and a very high position, were withheld from one who was most deserving, and most justly entitled to inherit them; but owing to a difference of faith between the parties, justice seemed never likely to be done. Mrs. Lorraine, who always spoke in a whisper, as if every bit of furniture had ears,

alluded next, with well-expressed abhorrence, to those who could withhold any just claim from another, and with affectionate sympathy mentioned the poor defrauded orphan, in whom Beatrice could not but feel convinced that she recognised herself. More and more frequent grew the occasions on which Mrs. Lorraine wandered casually into the private sitting-room allotted to Beatrice, "The Den," as it was called, or met her, if she ever took a solitary walk, or called when Lady Edith had gone out; or was, in short, constantly now a shadow on her path, and always mysterious.

Lady Edith herself might have almost forgotten that Mrs. Lorraine existed, so very seldom did they meet, and so very little encouragement did her visits at the school receive; till at length finding her presence as useful and more acceptable elsewhere, Lady Edith for some weeks devoted herself entirely to the sick, and relinquished the school to Mrs. Lorraine's energetic guidance.

The new schoolmistress had that happy art of governing others which seemed like no art at all. She at once took the reins at Clanmarina with so masterly a hand, that all around felt, they scarcely knew why, as if she were absolutely entitled to their most implicit obedience. Still that unaccountable magnetic influence, which often seems to cause an instinctive liking or antipathy to individuals, made Lady Edith more and more conscious that it was impossible for her ever to like or trust Mrs. Lorraine, though that did not prevent her kind heart from treating the schoolmistress with every considerate attention. Lady Edith felt it quite an animating perplexity to discover why this apparently whimsical prejudice in her own mind could not be conquered; but meet the schoolmistress when or where she might, this feeling of distrust seemed always instinctively to increase.

The diligence of Mrs. Lorraine in her school was so immeasurable that Beatrice one day, with a feeling of respectful compassion, jestingly said to her, "Do you never sleep at all? or perhaps you close only one eye at a time, Mrs. Lorraine? I see your candles blazing long after midnight, and you are always first up in the morning, as I often observe you coming back from a stroll towards Eaglescairn, when I am dressing for breakfast. These are almost monastic hours!"

"I am a working-bee, not an idle drone in the hive," said Mrs. Lorraine, turning away, and continuing for some time to gaze out of the window, without saying more, while her young companion wished her thoughts would oftener take the air, and secretly wondered also whether she ever changed her clothes, as the same serge gown and indescribable black bonnet had appeared in the school week after week, without any visible alteration, except their looking if possible more shabby. Beatrice felt certain that if the kind-hearted and liberal Lady Edith observed this poverty of dress, she would devise some unobtrusive way to remedy it; yet, though poor in other respects, Mrs. Lorraine was most astonishingly rich in

books. Many publications, new and old, she recommended to Beatrice for perusal, and always happened "fortunately, and by the merest chance," to possess a copy which she offered to lend her, but invariably added, in her usual laconic monotonous accent, "May I beg you not to show this, as I never lend my books. It is a rule I would break through for no one but yourself; and at the same time I should dislike to refuse the Clintons or Lady Edith, if they asked me. You are quite safe in reading Milner's 'End of Controversy,' and St. Bonaventure's 'Life of our Lord.' Pray finish these, however, as soon as you can, and let me have them back, that I may send you Ignatius Loyola, and St. Francis de Sales. There are those deeply interested in you, Miss Farinelli, who would rejoice to hear of our having met, conversed, and read together!"

"Indeed! tell me! oh, tell me more!" said Beatrice earnestly.

"Pray," asked Mrs. Lorraine, with slow deliberate emphasis, "Why do you suppose that I am here, Miss Farinelli, labouring in this laborious vocation?"

"I am so matter-of-fact as to suppose it is because you wished to fulfil its duties," replied Beatrice, surveying Mrs. Lorraine with wondering perplexity, and speaking in a low anxious tone; "Excuse me if I cannot imagine any other."

"Life, without hopes and fears, would be a mere nonentity; but you seem not to look forward beyond dinner-time," continued the schoolmistress, as she narrowly watched the speaking countenance of Beatrice. "I could add greatly to the interest of yours. If you set a trap well to catch a secret, perhaps it may be successful; but you must offer the right bait."

"What can I offer? My only earthly possession is hope!" exclaimed Beatrice, becoming more and more agitated, while the dry measured tone of Mrs. Lorraine seemed as if adapted for her peculiar tantalization. "You might surely reveal, at least, on what conditions I am ever to know that in which my whole earthly happiness seems at stake."

"There is a conspiracy to withhold from you a rightful succession; and as the newspapers sometimes say, you may yet hear something to your advantage," answered Mrs. Lorraine, fixing on Beatrice her dark flashing eye, and giving a strange suppressed laugh. "But there are conditions annexed to the disclosure with which you may not yet be willing to comply."

"Any conditions consistent with my duty to God, and with my grateful affection to Lady Edith, shall be most thankfully accepted," exclaimed the pale and astonished Beatrice, in a tone of almost breathless eagerness, while Mrs. Lorraine, with her cat-like expression, slyly watched the sparkling animation of Beatrice's countenance and the flitting colour on her cheek, when the trembling girl added, "As you hope for happiness here and hereafter, oh, tell me all! or at least tell me something!—anything!"

"Have you not been too long content here already, in depend-

ence and obscurity?" said Mrs. Lorraine, assuming a tone of compassionate mystery; "I can release you from both."

"How?—when?—speak on!" said Beatrice, almost inaudible from extreme agitation; while Mrs. Lorraine paused with a look of subdued triumph, and then coldly added, "Not now—not yet. After having been accustomed for years to implicit submission here, you could not at once, to please an unknown relative, of whose desires I am aware, throw off all adherence to Lady Edith and her Protestant faith?"

"Impossible! her creed is mine! all the love and earthly duty I can ever owe to a generous benefactress are hers. Oh! never could I listen to a suggestion injurious to Lady Edith. Let me rather die in ignorance of what I would give—more than life to hear."

"If that be your contemptible resolution, mine is equally taken," replied Mrs. Lorraine, becoming irritated beyond all control, and her eyes assuming an expression of fierceness that might have suited Rachel. "Remain obscure, then, since you are content, yet pray consider that necessity has no law but its own, and conform yourself to my will. Is it not rather mortifying that whenever any one asks, as is often done,—'Who can Miss Farinelli be?' the invariable answer is,—'Nobody.'"

"Mrs. Lorraine," answered Beatrice, with mournful earnestness, while her honest open young face was a singular contrast to the sly underhand look of her watchful companion; "There are different sorts of content! Mine would be despicable, as you call it, could I remain willingly ignorant of those mysteries relating to myself, of which you seem informed. If by any means but the sacrifice of conscience and gratitude I can hear your secret, oh! make me grateful for ever by telling me all."

"Not now—not yet! the subject will not bear any more talking about," replied Mrs. Lorraine, coldly; "If you do not care for a distinguished name, still say nothing of what has passed to Lady Edith; should I ever find that you have done so, that will at once prostrate all hope of your ever hearing a romantic history connected with yourself such as it would not be easy to match. The padlock shall remain in your own hand till you choose to make use of the right key; but let me remind you that the secret of your birth might greatly influence Sir Allan. The course of true love becomes a course of false love sometimes."

Beatrice trembled with agitation, and wept with disappointment that the *dénouement* which had seemed so near was now perhaps for ever postponed, and she kept her eyes immoveably fixed on Mrs. Lorraine's countenance, which remained still and inexpressive as stone. "Well!" thought Beatrice, with all the honest warmth of a young, ardent, and conscientious spirit, "if the wire of secretiveness is to remain on Mrs. Lorraine for ever, that cannot be helped. No mortal is entirely happy; therefore why should I expect all to go smoothly with me? Of all miseries in life the sorrow of sorrows

would be to act against my own heart and conscience, to be morally dissatisfied with myself, as I should certainly be if I sacrificed any right feeling to obtain Mrs. Lorraine's extraordinary secret. What can it be, and shall I ever know it? When with her, I seem for ever casting my line in the stream and bringing up nothing."

Beatrice turned the subject in her mind over and over and over again to her heart's content, or rather to her fancy's content. In her restless anxious mind, if intense thought could have brought wrinkles to so fair a young forehead, hers might have been disfigured by them; but not another gleam of light reached her from Mrs. Lorraine, who calmly avoided all intercourse for several weeks, and looked like a person extremely ill-treated, while Beatrice felt that a frigid spell was thrown over her of perplexity and suspense.

The young village beauty, Bessie McDonald, was afflicted at home, with a step-mother of that old school now extinct, harsh, cold, and tyrannical, who gave her much work, little food, and still less kindness; therefore to her it was an agreeable relaxation when, after milking her father's two cows and arranging the dairy, she could escape from her own stern fire-side to visit her kind old uncle at Heatherbrae, or to teach at the school. There she soon grew into marvellous favour with Mrs. Lorraine, who took an evident delight in fostering her visionary and imaginative temperament, by lending her books of fanciful theology, only too suitable for such a purpose. From this time the lonely girl might often be observed on a rustic seat under the old yew-tree in Mrs. Lorraine's garden, spending every holiday-moment in a state of entranced delight over the numerous books mysteriously confided to her for private perusal; and always after the volume was closed Mrs. Lorraine contrived to spare a few minutes, during which to discuss the contents with all her usual ability, and embellishing her conversation with picturesque legends and bold perversions of Bible truth.

"Is this quite entirely a Protestant book?" asked Bessie one day rather anxiously, but very much frightened to question Mrs. Lorraine. "My old uncle has been inquiring very often lately what authors you allow me to read here."

"Quite right! only look at the title-page. You see it is published by a Protestant book-seller, written by a clergyman of the Established Church, and dedicated to a bishop. What more could your uncle desire, child?"

"Notwithstanding it is as you say," replied Bessie, "I never should have supposed it to be so entirely Protestant."

"That shows how little you know on the subject," answered Mrs. Lorraine, in a tone of rather angry contempt; "but if you have been instructed to any purpose, the reading of a few Catholic authors could do you no earthly harm. Here is, for instance, one which I wish to talk over with you fully next week; therefore read this volume carefully, but always leave it here when you go home, as I cannot spare the book at present."

Bessie found that the work so strongly recommended to her contained the memoirs of three men who had been canonized by a cardinal in 1839, and were held up as examples to all mankind in the present day. To Bessie's astonished mind it appeared that these three meritorious individuals had never allowed themselves one moment of bodily ease or mental tranquillity, from the miserable hour when they were born till they died. For them the sun shone in vain, as they lived with their eyes for ever fixed on the ground. To them the gift of speech was useless, as they took a vow of perpetual silence; sleep and food were enemies to be abhorred and avoided; if they could have breathed only once in an hour they would have tried the experiment; and by them every tie of earthly affection was contemptuously abjured, though that text of Holy Scripture, in favour of human attachments, occurred to the memory of Bessie, along with several others that Mrs. Lorraine would have thought it convenient to make her forget,—“He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

“Bessie!” said a low deep voice, that made the young girl not only start, but blush the deepest crimson, as with an almost guilty feeling the book dropped from her hand. “I thought you were turned into stone, sitting so immoveably there for the last half hour, during which time I have been watching you from our garden.”

“Robert!” said Bessie, smiling with delight as young Carre approached her, and looking the very image of Murillo's celebrated flower-girl; “well, this is a surprise! You may pick up my book if you choose for me, but do not read the name, as Mrs. Lorraine forbade me to let that be seen.”

“Indeed! and what good reason can she have, Bessie? Is she afraid I shall put on the spectacles of criticism?” replied Robert, most honorably averting his eye from the volume as he handed it to her; “I never think well of anybody who deals in small secrets, and this seems to me the very smallest.”

These words were not fully uttered when Mrs. Lorraine herself stood before Robert Carre, while Bessie uttered an exclamation of surprise and consternation. The schoolmistress looked calm and smiling as usual; but smiles are of very different expression, and hers was a strange one. She seemed perfectly unconscious of his remark, and could it have been possible, young Carre might have thought she had not overheard him; but that not being within the power of hope, he could only wonder at her entire command of countenance, when she spoke to him in the usual tone of distant civility, which ever since her arrival at Clanmarina she had assumed to him, and with which she had contrived to exclude Robert Carre and many others from the charge they had hitherto taken of the school.

Mrs. Lorraine had taught for two months with unflinching energy and perseverance, when Lady Edith one evening, after tea,

observed in reply to a remark of Beatrice about the new school-mistress, "Really her words are so scarce that the castle guns should be fired every time she utters a syllable. It is unlike me in general, I hope, to say that, knowing no harm of Mrs. Lorraine, I cannot endure her."

"It is difficult," answered Beatrice, "to like such a totally unlikeable person."

"She is inestimable certainly in the school, though somehow I wish she had never entered it. In respect to sociability, I find myself rather unwelcome at my own little school, and she is no acquisition in the drawing-room; but we must throw a rose-coloured tint over her oddities, if possible."

McDonald, who assumed all the privileges common to old domestics, was a little troubled with that frequent disease of mind among servants—extreme curiosity, and on such occasions he often contrived, while listening with the most intense attention, a most ingenious succession of trifling acts to do, as an excuse for lingering, while he officiously tidied the room, arranged the books, folded up the newspapers, and drilled the fire-irons. Beatrice, to her own secret diversion, watched the old butler, who looked as misanthropical as a perfect Timon that day, while contriving so many unnecessary services; but Lady Edith continued to talk without remarking any of them.

"How apt we are," she said, reflectively, "to fancy that the real characters of others can by some supernatural instinct be easily read, when they are, in fact, the most inscrutable of mysteries. Who can tell what degree of benevolence, or of hatred, or ambition, or thirst for money, or craving for power may be burning in the soul of a self-contained, quiet-looking iceberg like Mrs. Lorraine? McDonald, your tables are brushed quite enough now. They are always so bright that I can see myself reflected in them, but tonight I really could almost see the carpet through this mahogany."

"My lady!" replied McDonald, looking much pleased and yet gravely anxious. "Your ladyship may see through that table or the hardest mill-stone sooner than you, or any one, can see through Mrs. Lorraine."

"How, McDonald! What do you mean? Everybody praises Mrs. Lorraine to me, except you."

"So much the worse, my lady! Those who honour your ladyship would say as I do if they knew her. By means of examining Bessie, I long suspected her to be a vile deceiver: she looked like a cheat, and I mistrusted her all along: but," added McDonald, clenching his teeth as he spoke, and giving a general glance towards Beatrice, "if there be a knave on the earth, Mrs. Lorraine is one, as we shall all have too much reason soon to know. She is praiser-general to the whole school, and coaxing all the children to obey her, but she has always the look of one afraid to be found out, and is——"

"Compose yourself, McRonald, and tell me all you suspect," replied Lady Edith, in a tone of tremulous anxiety, for she saw that the old man was livid with agitation. "You never liked Mrs. Lorraine, and may be mistaken."

"No, my lady!" replied he, with respectful earnestness, but unable to restrain a solemn shake of the head and a serious grimace, "I have not served in Spain and Italy for nothing! Duncan McRonald is no raw recruit. Depend upon the truth of what I say, that Mrs. Lorraine is a Jesuit."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lady Edith, with piercing intensity of tone and look. "What can make you think so?"

"She is a Jesuit,—or at least, what is ten times worse, a Jesuit-ess," added the old man, assuming a tone of huge contempt, to conceal very great grief and agitation. "Murder will out! From the crown of her head to the sole of her foot Mrs. Lorraine looks like a Jesuit, and is one."

"What could such a person want here, McRonald? oh no! quite a mistake," replied Lady Edith, trying to disbelieve what the old man said, while he stood sturdily at the door for a moment, and gave a short deprecatory cough before disappearing; "we have no Jesuits in the Highlands. Our country is not rich enough to tempt them here."

"They belong only to legends of the dark ages," observed Beatrice to Lady Edith. "A Jesuit is as much out of date in our own country now, as the long exploded witchcraft of remote antiquity. McRonald must be dreaming!"

"Or perhaps he is wide awake when others are blind," observed Lady Edith, reflectively. "My own unsuspectingness may have created a danger. If any one slumbers when a Jesuit is within reach, it should be with one eye open, as I shall do for the future. McRonald may have seen better through a fog than myself."

"He has looked as cross as rheumatism could make him, ever since Mrs. Lorraine appeared in this neighbourhood," observed Beatrice, laughingly. "He ushered her in yesterday with the dignity of a field-marshal, and there was a solemnity in his shake of the head when accomplishing his last dignified retreat, that might have done for the statue in Don Juan."

"He evidently means to counteract our new schoolmistress or perish in the attempt. These Jesuits always wish to ensnare the young, and I would rather see one of Shrapnell's shells explode in this house than receive a Jesuit into it, for his first step always is, to shatter and blow up all family peace," said Lady Edith, with a gesture of impatient disgust. "He would have no scruple in setting a friend's house on fire to warm his own, and in causing as many divisions as possible, that the young may find no peace, mental or domestic, but in joining his own sect."

"Can it be possible that McRonald is right!" exclaimed Beatrice, who had been diligently counting her stitches, but suddenly

started as a new light seemed to break upon her. "Let me confess a fault to you, dear aunt Edith! From Mrs. Lorraine it is somehow impossible to conceal anything, and the influence she gradually acquires becomes certainly almost irresistible. She has been clandestinely lending me, of late, some strange books full of pretended miracles and impossible visions, none of which made any impression on my mind, and she extracted a promise from me not to show them, nor to repeat some hints she dropped in respect to my own early history. I now see the guilt and danger of having allowed any concealments from you, and never while I live in this round world shall it happen again."

Lady Edith silently and affectionately embraced her adopted child in her arms, and not a word or a look of reproach escaped from her lips; but as nothing on earth could exceed her settled horror of Jesuitism, she sat for some time in silent consternation at this unexpected discovery, while a chill and a shiver crept over her, as she thought of the escape which Beatrice had probably made from being seduced into a most dangerous course of pernicious reading.

Next morning, after the whole school had assembled, Lady Edith unexpectedly entered, calm and self-possessed as usual, but with her eye fixed on Mrs. Lorraine, who did not once look up, so that it seemed strange how she could have become aware that any one had arrived, which in a moment she certainly did. Lady Edith stood for an instant kindly contemplating her little school, and all the children in whom she had so long taken a cordial interest, after which she said, assuming a tone of benevolent authority,—“My dear young friends, may your hearts be always as merry as your faces! If any of you have lately received from any one a gift or a loan of books or tracts, I wish you to bring them all here to me now. I shall wait for an hour in this place with Mrs. Lorraine, during which, let each child who ever loved me, or who ever received a kindness from me, hurry home and return here, bringing all the little tell-me-a-story books each of you has read during the last month.”

Mrs. Lorraine, in spite of her usual self-possession, started at these words and coloured deeply, but in a moment she took a firm resolution and recovered herself, so that the struggle was no longer apparent, during which Lady Edith added, in a tone of placid command,—“Mrs. Lorraine, you can of course make no objection to my inspecting the books read by these children, for whose welfare I have made myself answerable. Go, my dear young people, as quickly as possible. Mrs. Lorraine and I shall wait here till you return.”

Lady Edith possessed one of those finely constituted natures which felt more shame in the exposure of another's guilt than the criminal herself, therefore she became greatly agitated now; while Mrs. Lorraine sat with features composed and placid as if they had never known emotion of any description. Her look had now be-

come so torpid and unchangeable that Lavater himself could not have traced an atom of expression in them, but she quietly rose to leave the room. Lady Edith seeing this, calmly insisted on her remaining, on which Mrs. Lorraine, giving a slight shrug, resumed her place, where she continued sitting, with a highly moral air of deliberate self-confidence that almost staggered Lady Edith's suspicions.

When the pupils had all re-appeared, a display of literature took place such as Lady Edith, in her wildest dreams, could not have apprehended. Each scholar had received a tract to exchange weekly, containing the life of some half-crazed monk or nun, who had forsaken every duty of life, to live, like St. Simon, on the top of a pillar, or like some other *soi-disant* saint, at the bottom of a cave, avoiding the light of day, crawling on their hands and knees, starving, beating, and cutting themselves, praying till they were reported to have become visibly suspended above the ground, and fasting till, in an excess of spiritual pride, they believed themselves capable of performing miracles. These tracts were all enclosed in the covers which had been provided for the Protestant stories which had hitherto been lent by Mr. Clinton to the children, and had exactly the same external aspect as the "Parent's Assistant" or the "Tales of a Grandfather."

Lady Edith glanced over these pages, given to the pupils of her own school, with a mixture of wonder and consternation not to be described, while Mrs. Lorraine continued as perfectly calm as if sculptured in marble. Not a muscle in her face was altered, her lip did not quiver, her eye was steadily fixed on one pattern of the carpet, as if counting the stitches, and when she at last spoke her voice did not falter. The schoolmistress had even a look of gloomy satisfaction as she clandestinely watched the agitated countenance of Lady Edith, when glancing rapidly, with true Protestant aversion, over the well-known fables relating to St. Bridget and St. Francis. That the young children confidentially entrusted to Mrs. Lorraine's charge should have been betrayed into reading works so destructive of reason and morals, and so inflammatory to a young imagination, filled their benefactress with amazement and regret.

"Mrs. Lorraine!" said Lady Edith, with mournful sternness, fixing her calm bright eye on the schoolmistress, who instantly looked away, which was nothing new, as she scarcely ever met the eye of any one, "my opinion of your conduct on this occasion is too painful to be uttered. You have endeavoured, in the name of all that is holy, excellent, and truthful, to teach all that is degrading and false. I need not, however, reproach you for this breach of trust, having discovered that you belong to an order which keeps no faith with those who differ from themselves."

Mrs. Lorraine sat immoveably silent, but assuming the hopeless smile of one who feels totally misrepresented, yet cares not to justify herself; while Lady Edith, after a short pause in hopes of some

reply, continued: "I know that you can be made to feel no compunction, because the laws of God and man are in your eyes probably both subservient to the commands of your own superior, and that the more your conscience and feelings are outraged by obeying a Jesuit priest, the greater is your merit in his estimation. Protestants to friends must be open, and even to enemies sincere,—they must act the truth as well as speak it, so that I can scarcely cease to trust any one I have once esteemed; but you have forfeited all claim to my confidence. We part now and for ever."

After a pause of several minutes, Lady Edith added, in an undertone of relenting kindness, which however did not draw out a syllable of thanks or one momentary gleam of emotion from Mrs. Lorraine, who looked as sternly round as if the lives of the whole school were at her mercy: "Perhaps this unexpected rupture may cause you pecuniary inconvenience, let me therefore assure you that the expenses shall all be abundantly defrayed of restoring you to your own distant home."

"My home hereafter is in Clanmarina—my mission is here!" replied Mrs. Lorraine deliberately, but with a glance at Lady Edith that should have withered her into dust; then turning round afterwards to the pupils, she addressed them in the gentlest accents, saying, "My dear young friends! you see me most unjustly blamed and persecuted for lending you a few harmless books and for all the kindness I have endeavoured to show you. Nothing, nowever, can make me such a fool or such a coward as to desert you. I shall visit at each of your homes to-morrow, and those who choose shall next week find a school far better supplied with books than this, at my own house."

"Children!" said Lady Edith, and paused, for her voice failed and tears rolled down her face, though she would not acknowledge them by raising her handkerchief. A momentary silence ensued, as the image of Sir Evan arose in her thoughts, able as he would have been to cope with this difficulty. It was with an almost superhuman effort that she at length regained her utterance, and proceeded—"Children! years before any of you were born, I was the friend of your parents, and long before one of you could speak, I have prayed for you all. Little did I then think,—little did I think till this day, what changed times might come to Clanmarina! that a stranger should enter our little community to build a bridge for you away from Protestantism,—away from the pure faith of your ancestors,—away from your Bible,—away from that Church for which your fathers bled and died! Be warned, dear children, by the voice you have long known and obeyed. Beware of a religion addressed only to the senses, a false religion which extinguishes individual conscience, and which makes every saint and priest as well as the Pope, a God."

No pupil expressed more unmitigated abhorrence, more cordial and deliberate hatred of Mrs. Lorraine's imposture than Bessie

McDonald, whose lovely intelligent young countenance lighted up with indignation at the flagrant imposition inflicted on her benefactress, and who returned the condemned tracts with the air of a duchess, though there was a peculiar grace and almost infantine brightness in her manner and expression as she turned away; but great was her mortification to hear Mrs. Lorraine say in a tone of quiet satire, "I delight in heroics! they always give me hopes of a proselyte. Private theatricals are quite to my taste when an actress performs her part so amusingly as you do to-day." So great, nevertheless, was the power exercised by Mrs. Lorraine over the judgment and feelings of her pupils, that when with stately composure and a hard remorseless eye, she extended her hand to each scholar at parting, not one had moral courage enough to refuse the expected civility of a curtsy. Even Bessie, with flashing eyes, burning cheeks, and very obvious hesitation, accepted the unwelcome hand, but turned her beautiful countenance instantly away with a glance of indignant reproachfulness.

When Robert Carre heard that Mrs. Lorraine had been actually detected in tampering with the faith of her pupils, the fact so exactly tallied with his own recent suspicions, that on being assured of her dismissal he threw his hat in the air, executed an exaggerated pirouette, snapped his fingers, and exhibited other symptoms of almost lunatic delight, the whole of which were in due course of time reported privately by one of her very few adherents to Mrs. Lorraine.

"Better far, Bessie," said Robert Carre, while the young girl gave a little nervous laugh, "that you had never learned to read, than that your mind should be perverted by such books as Mrs. Lorraine's. If Providence did not give you more health of body and mind than her system allows, you would be ill off. We may build the great wall of China around Clanmarina, however, sooner than stop the progress of that Mrs. Jesuit's teaching, unless you have yourself the sense to reject her perversions. Do not deliberately singe your wings, Bessie, by hovering about a deceiver that hangs out false lights."

"I thought no harm of these nice, curious, wonderful books," replied Bessie, with a deep blush, and fixing her eyes on Robert's dog till she nearly stared Ponto out of countenance. "Mrs. Lorraine assured me that they were not at all Popish,—indeed, she said that Lady Edith would approve them all, or I never should have presumed to read a page."

"Mrs. Lorraine should be put in the corner for telling a lie, if she called this a Protestant book!—the Life of St. Dominick, and a frontispiece representing the saint carrying his head under his arm! You had much better keep to the story-books, full of Cowgate Scotch, and 'My Certie!' 'Hoo's aw wi ye?' dialogues, that so many people have an innocent pleasure of reading now, than study such magical tales as these, even though Mrs. Lorraine warrants

them Protestant. We heretics, Bessie, must speak the truth, though heaven and earth come together; but a Jesuit conscience is of different materials, or could Mrs. Lorraine ever have said that Lady Edith Tremorne approved of a book such as 'The Glories of Mary,' or 'The Garden of the Soul?' The religion they teach is not Christianity, but Mariolatry!" said Robert Carre indignantly, while there was a tremulous twitching about the mouth of Bessie that betrayed great agitation, though she had no reply but a silent tear. "Human speech is an awful thing, Bessie; beware, therefore, of any one who would teach you to believe a lie. There are falsehoods circulating in the world now, which were spoken by those who lived centuries ago. Their souls are perhaps already in hell for speaking them; but, nevertheless, such lies live in the world, still doing mischief, and still bearing witness against those who first told them."

Robert Carre's lip quivered with emotion as he spoke, for it had become evident to him, how zealously every inch of ground must be fought now at Clanmarina between truth and falsehood, between the religion of Mary and the religion of Christ; and he trembled for Bessie as well as for every individual he loved, thinking how their faith would now be tried in the fire. There was ranged against Protestant truth now all the power of falsehood in Mrs. Lorraine, and all the power of overwhelming wealth in the family at Eagles-cairn; therefore his heart sank at the prospect, but it would have sunk still more deeply had he known, that though Bessie spoke and felt with boundless horror of Romanism, she had nevertheless imbibed a taste for the reading which leads to Rome, and acquired some of the thoughts and the propensities which tend most surely to that direction.

CHAPTER XV.

"She was one of those kinds of nuns, an' please your honour, of which your honour knows there are a good many in Flanders, which they let go loose."

Tristram Shandy.

LADY EDITH might as well have attempted to take the moon out of the water as to remove Mrs. Lorraine from Clanmarina. Before many days, the intruder, who seemed now to have an unlimited command of money, established her opposition school at Clanmarina, upon the most attractive plan, with a tea-party on Saturday to all the pupils. She moreover opened an extremely fascinating little bazaar, in which she completely under-sold the small village shop-of-all-work, where hitherto the humble penny customers had been supplied with tea, sugar, brooms, tape, needles, tracts, snuff

biscuits, rat-traps, gingerbread elephants, tobacco-pipes, and other groceries. The new schoolmistress adorned her windows most enticingly with gaudy stucco images of St. Joseph at ninepence each, rosaries of scarlet beads for eighteen-pence, and coloured pictures of monks and nuns in very devout attitudes, while exhibiting faces of most disastrous melancholy. These had a sort of terrifying attraction for the young, who constantly paused as they passed, flattened their noses against the window-pane, and after staring first at the barley-sugar medals, and then at the painted idols, lingered with awe-stricken but delighted horror to gaze at a dismal nun, with an immense tear for ever on her cheek, or at a monk evidently starving and torturing himself to death. This was all so new to the children, and even to their parents, that all ages and sexes clustered eagerly round the little fascinating shop, with their large round eyes staring at these wonderful representations, and their noses almost breaking the glass while trying to read these authentic histories, and wishing to buy story-books that told tales as fearful and as truthful as a night-mare, every one more romantic than the Seven Champions of Christendom.

Mrs. Lorraine, with smiling philanthropy, invited all the young people to enter her warehouse, and benevolently sold them bargains of her books and tracts for whatever price they could afford to give, adding sometimes a present of a print representing some terrifying *auto-da-fé*, or some incredible apparition.

At an unusually early hour one morning, Lady Edith had set out, intending to try whether by any means she could persuade Mrs. Lorraine to discontinue her proselyting manœuvres, for gaining over her pretty young favourite, Bessie, respecting whose intimacy with the schoolmistress, old McRonald, the girl's uncle, had expressed that day the greatest uneasiness; therefore Lady Edith determined to speak in few, but resolute terms, her opinion of the falsehood and treachery by which Mrs. Lorraine had obtained a place in the confidence of those she was now betraying.

The little garden leading from Heatherbrae-lane to Mrs. Lorraine's cottage, was a lovely but almost impenetrable thicket of roses and briars, intersected with sprays of honeysuckle, and studded with fox-glove, periwinkle, and long wreaths of hawthorn. The whole enclosure had become populous with birds, but besides the thrushes and blackbirds and the hum of bees, Lady Edith, on entering Mrs. Lorraine's garden, heard the hum of two voices apparently in very deep conference within a small arbour of fragrant woodbines at a retired nook of the little enclosure. Turning carelessly round, to see who at this early hour could be thus earnestly engaged in conversation, she gave a start of painful surprise on recognising Mr. Clinton seated with an open book on the table before him. He was deeply occupied in reading it to Mrs. Lorraine, who sat demure, sedate, pale, and downcast in her shabby gown and unspeakable bonnet, as usual, but listening most intently, and break-

ing in to make a remark from time to time, which she did in a low earnest voice, while her companion listened with profound attention.

After standing for some minutes transfixed in astonished contemplation of this profoundly occupied pair, Lady Edith advanced slowly towards the arbour, making her presence purposely audible by a slight cough. On hearing this, Mr. Clinton, with a startled look, rose to meet Lady Edith, but his manner, unlike its ordinary quiet tone, was this morning fussy, fidgety, bustling, and speechifying, though making an evident effort to seem composed, as he hurriedly advanced, saying in a confidential aside,—

“I am quite delighted to see you here, so very *à propos*, Lady Edith! Mrs. Lorraine, poor soul! applied to me some time since for a few explanations in defence of our Church, which of course it is my professional duty not to withhold. She seems very open to argument, very humble, very much to be pitied, and is exceedingly enlightened herself. Mrs. Lorraine is, in short, a most remarkable woman.”

“Very remarkable, indeed!” replied Lady Edith, emphatically, “and I hope we ne’er shall look upon her like again in Clanmarina. Mr. Clinton, I am a very old woman now, and have known this world fifty years longer than you; let me, then, though your office is generally to teach me, in this one instance warn you to be careful of associating with Mrs. Lorraine, or of setting that example to your people. She is a dangerous woman and a Jesuitess.”

“What a hardened unbeliever you are in poor Mrs. Lorraine! Do you mean deliberately to assert, my dear Lady Edith, that in good honest old England there are actual Jesuits crawling about in society!” replied Mr. Clinton, laughing incredulously, and carefully putting his spectacles into their case: “as Mrs. Lorraine says, you and I should know the world better now than to believe in such hobgoblins and wandering fanatics. These stories are, as Mrs. Lorraine remarks, mere tittle-tattle, unworthy of you, the most sensible woman on earth—and the best.”

“I am not to be flattered out of my fears, Mr. Clinton. Beware of Mrs. Lorraine!” replied Lady Edith, her fine features mantling red with anxiety; “the lay Jesuits, you know, are called ‘Jesuits of the short gown,’ but Mrs. Lorraine’s is short enough to betray a cloven foot underneath. Like a hawk seizing on its prey, she would pounce on the young and unwary in your congregation. She would relieve them of any anxiety respecting their little property, by taking all they possess or ever shall inherit, giving each deluded victim but one certainty, namely, that whatever he has to resign, shall afterwards be for ever withheld from himself and his relations. In compensation the convert receives a mass, beneficently settled upon him after death.”

Mrs. Lorraine had very remarkable ears, so acute that it seemed as if she could hear the very grass grow; and she listened with her whole might to this conversation, while a look of malignant satis-

faction glittered in her eyes when Lady Edith, with a last glance of most anxious solicitude, prepared to withdraw. Mr. Clinton politely escorted her to the garden-gate, where she said, in accents of deep emotion, at parting, "I cannot be so unfriendly a friend as not once more to warn you earnestly, Mr. Clinton, against that strange delirium which comes over those who trust themselves to associate with Jesuits. Why link yourself in any degree, or in any way with Mrs. Lorraine? Why give her your sanction in the village, by letting her be seen with you? Mr. Clinton, you have often said to me, that the reputation of a clergyman is as easily injured as the wing of a butterfly: once touched, the stain is irreparable. If, then, Mrs. Lorraine wishes to become a Protestant, let her come to your church for instruction, and let her read such books as you recommend, rather than point out a course of reading to you; but do not, as a Protestant clergyman, become her confessor!"

Mr. Clinton laughingly held out his hand to Lady Edith, saying, in a tone of cheerful obstinacy, "Never fear! Mrs. Lorraine has no more influence with me than that pebble under my foot; but she compares herself to a shattered wreck upon the waters, looking up to me for guidance; and, *coute qui coute*, she shall have it. A more interesting case than hers I never met with."

Mr. Clinton, having taken leave of Lady Edith, strolled back to Mrs. Lorraine, saying, in an apologetic tone, while the cordage of his angry countenance relaxed into a smile, "My excellent friend, Lady Edith, takes quite a commander-in-chief tone to-day; but she has so many admirable first-rate qualities, that one must forgive what is so well intended."

"It is best for us all, when we are hated and despised, even by a person so supremely good as Lady Edith, whom I admire and love as every one must; yet surely you may act for yourself here without having for ever to ask, 'What will Mrs. Grundy say?' observed Mrs. Lorraine, with her usual audacious hypocrisy. "Let all eyes be averted from me with indifference or dislike,—let no human being love me, for the ties of affection in this sinful world are ensnaring, and therefore sinful. Never let me be defended from obloquy; for that is an atmosphere to which I must accustom myself."

"But," said Mr. Clinton, with vivid interest, "why encourage a false opinion against yourself?"

"I encourage no opinion at all, Mr. Clinton," replied Mrs. Lorraine, glancing after Lady Edith, with an expression of scornful pity. "My only aim is, with your inestimable advice, to obtain a pious tranquillity, alike forgetting and forgot,—to obey rather than to command,—to have nothing, and to be nothing."

CHAPTER XVI.

"What shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that?"—KEMBLE.

It appeared from that day to Lady Edith and Beatrice, as if it were impossible to stray beyond their own enclosure without unwillingly encountering Mr. Clinton, in the shadiest lanes, slowly escorting Mrs. Lorraine, while they were evidently plunged into the very deepest of conferences, and would have agreed with the old proverb, that "three are bad company." One day, Mr. Clinton having called on Lady Edith, who had not once alluded to the subject of his Popish conferences again, abruptly said, in a very gratified and self-justifying tone, "You will be happy to hear, Lady Edith, that Mrs. Lorraine seems rapidly coming round to be again a firm Protestant. She is even thinking to take a large pew in St. Mark's, provided I allow her to teach singing in my own school, particularly the 'Gregorian chants,' to which there can be no rational objection; and she has presented me with a magnificent altar-cloth, rather more decorated than you may like, but quite orthodox. I have also most carefully examined the tracts she is now so liberally distributing; and, truly, nothing can be more harmless,—rather imaginative, perhaps, but nevertheless excellent; and the children are quite enchanted with them."

"Mr. Clinton," said Lady Edith, with earnest kindness, "on the subject of Mrs. Lorraine I have been silent, though not convinced. Neither you nor Mrs. Clinton apprehend any of the dangers I so anxiously warned you both against; therefore, I have long dropped the subject, though these sort of platonic friendships are very seldom safe to both parties. Madame de Chantal and St. Francis de Sales are instances of the misery such religious intimacies often produce, even where there is no actual guilt; and our Protestant Church countenances no such confidential intercourse as a confessor or director may enjoy with persons like Mrs. Lorraine. You have begun the discussion with me now; therefore let me only say, what, if these were the last words I am ever to utter, I should feel bound to speak,—Beware of Mrs. Lorraine! She is treacherous and influential, with a dreadful ardour in misleading her victims. That woman evidently has the same love of intrigue as a gamester for play. She enjoys the mere excitement; and hers is that political as well as religious game, by which the sons and daughters of Loyola hope, at last, to domineer over us all, individually and collectively."

"Never fear!" replied Mr. Clinton, in a brief and rather imperious

tone; "you and the rest of my congregation seem to think, if there be a fog or an east wind, that it is poor Mrs. Lorraine's fault, and all warn me that she is dangerous; but the hour of my perversion, as she herself said to me yesterday, will not strike on the church clock of Clanmarina for a handful of centuries. Mrs. Lorraine tells me she has very bitter enemies who circulate a thousand absurd stories to vent their ill-will—all perfectly atrocious falsehoods, invented by those who circulate them."

"I should feel myself quite at a loss, Mr. Clinton, what to say, did I find myself disbelieved," observed Lady Edith with simple dignity. "That is a position in which during my very long life I never yet stood with any one. I am not now actuated by any dislike to Mrs. Lorraine personally, but by my very deep interest in you and yours. Do not, then, mistake me. As to individual human beings, I hate no one, but I would by every means counteract any mortal in doing mischief. I now bid you, Mr. Clinton, an anxious and very sorrowful farewell."

Next day was a breezy, airy, brilliant morning, the cattle standing knee-deep in the bright clear arrowy stream, while the whole world seemed one glorious scene of sunshine and flowers, when Lady Edith and Beatrice, tired of encountering Mr. Clinton and his intended proselyte, Mrs. Lorraine, in the shady bye-roads, resolved to try a new path towards Mrs. McDonald's cottage by the sea-shore. They were returning late in the evening homewards, along a winding down-hill road, among garlands of wild roses and foxglove, admiring a gorgeous setting sun of majestic beauty, which flooded the ocean with crimson, when Lady Edith observed two persons walking together at a slow, lagging, pensive pace. Suddenly both wanderers stopped irresolutely, as if unwilling to meet any one, and seemed yet more unwilling to meet Lady Edith and Beatrice, when they ascertained who it was that they had unexpectedly seen.

Could this be that perpetual Mrs. Lorraine again? thought Lady Edith: but no, it was Robert Carre, his tall figure, firm, erect, and vigorous, while with an air of rustic gallantry that became him admirably, he was escorting Bessie McDonald, "the little daisy of Clanmarina," homewards. Never had Lady Edith seen a brighter personification of human happiness than these two. Bessie in her cottage bonnet and gingham dress, with downcast eyes and blushing smiles, was inspecting a valentine of extremely gaudy colouring and sentimental character, representing a shepherd, in very pink silk-stockings, on one knee in a ploughed field, presenting a flaming bouquet of yellow daffodils to a young shepherdess dressed in a rainbow of variously coloured silks, and carrying in her arms a lamb larger than any full-grown sheep. The two young people together formed a pleasing group to represent the perfection of rural felicity a perfect pastoral in the style of Watteau; but while Lady Edith smilingly admired it, suddenly a pang shot through her mind as she thought how little the prudent money-making old farmer, Robert's

father, would be pleased had he seen them, and how small was the chance that this young man's love, even were it perfectly faithful and true, could turn out fortunate, considering the disparity in their condition.

While Bessie, with a pretty mixture of genuine modesty and village coquetry, contemplated the valentine, young Carre whistled to his greyhounds, switched the hedges, and in a tone of natural hilarity almost eclipsing the birds overhead, he carolled a rustic tune. There was in his sparkling dark eyes a pleasant good-humoured consciousness of his own attractions; but this interview was evidently intended to be clandestine, as Bessie, the moment she saw two figures advancing, paused, faltering, trembling, and fluttering till without waiting to ascertain for certain who they were, she darted into her mother's cottage, not even pausing to take leave of her lover, who slowly advanced along the path, and touched his hat to Lady Edith, saying in a somewhat apologetic tone:—

"I met Bessie McDonald coming out of Mrs. Lorraine's this afternoon, my Lady, and wished to see her safe home, or Father Eustace was preparing to do so. She is in less danger on the road alone, or anywhere, than at Mrs. Jesuit's, or with the Popish Confessor."

"True, Robert," answered Lady Edith anxiously, "there is not a better girl in Clanmarina at present than Bessie, and I think you agree with me. You and I are of one mind, too, I think, about the danger of her renewed intimacy with Mrs. Lorraine and Father Eustace, which is a very strange one. Both you and Bessie have been from earliest childhood under my friendly care, and as you both seem now firmly to believe yourselves grown up, have you well considered, Robert, to what your long-continued intimacy may lead? Your young companion is very lonely and unprotected, your father is very ambitious for a son he is so proud of, and therefore let me advise you not to encourage any mutual attachment unless with some rational hope that it may end happily."

"There might be difficulties with my father, no doubt," replied Robert, beheading a daisy with his switch. "Yet I would give all that I ever even wish to possess for his consent. It would be very important that Bessie and I should marry immediately, to secure her to myself, before she sees more of Mrs. Lorraine and Father Eustace, whose influence over her has most strangely increased of late. Lady Edith, let me say that the future could offer me no brighter hope on earth than to have a home for life with Bessie."

"Then, Robert, take my very best wishes for your happiness and success," replied Lady Edith kindly. "My views are very strong respecting the value of human happiness and the guilt of needlessly injuring that of any living mortal, especially of those who trust and love us; but if you have gained Bessie's young affections and given her in exchange your own, all promises well, and I trust all may soon go right."

Next day, about the same hour, Lady Edith and Beatrice were sitting in the sunny little parlour of Heatherbrae, making clothes for their parish basket, when McDonald, in a tone of unusual importance, announced that two persons below stairs wished, if convenient, to see Lady Edith immediately.

"What is their business, and who are they?" asked she looking up, when to her no small astonishment Lady Edith perceived that the old soldier's whole countenance sparkled with joy, and that his eyes perfectly glittered with a look of suppressed humour. Making an almost convulsive effort to preserve his usual tone of respectful gravity, he managed to articulate without laughing outright, though his countenance assumed a look of most comic resignation, "They bade me not mention any names, my Lady."

"Then," replied Lady Edith in her usual pleasant cheerful tone, and gazing intently into the depths of the fire, "you know I never see nameless intruders."

At this moment the proud and happy uncle of Bessie turned round, and with a look of most iniquitous drollery beckoned forward two persons who stood hesitatingly and lingeringly near the door. While one hung timidly back, the other seemed vainly urging her to advance, till at length, with the sort of desperation necessary for entering a dentist's audience-room, or for ascending the scaffold, Bessie, her cheeks in a brilliant glow, advanced, leaning on the arm of her proud and happy lover.

"If you please, my Lady, Bessie is a little shy at first," said Robert, coming forward and endeavouring to look as audacious himself as he could, though his handsome sun-burnt face wore a stain of scarlet on both cheeks very like shyness also. He glanced at the April-like joy beaming in the beautiful face of his young companion, whose artless features betrayed the pleasant consciousness of a first and only love, and added in a tone of respectful animation, "I have got my father's consent—likewise Bessie's, and all concerned; therefore our first visit together is to your Ladyship, the best friend either of us ever had, to ask your blessing on the wedding, to be—very soon, I hope."

"You have it with my whole heart, and with the very greatest pleasure; for, indeed, Robert, no one could have brought me better news," replied Lady Edith, kindly extending her hand to Bessie, whose face had grown as scarlet as the rose dangling at her lover's button-hole. "I like a marriage well when it is so suitable, and never did two young people set out in life together with what seems to me a better prospect of Christian felicity. As my two most esteemed pupils, you shall, for the few remaining days of my life, have my heartfelt good wishes and prayers. May good faith and good fortune attend you."

Robert bent his head in respectful acknowledgment of Lady Edith's warmly expressed kindness, and Bessie, with a tear and a smile glittering in her happy young face, looked the very personifi-

cation of a beautiful village bride in the earliest bloom of her felicity.

"You must ask me to the wedding," added Lady Edith with a pleasant smile. "I shall give her wedding-gown to the bride, and to you, Robert, as Burns calls it, 'the big ha' Bible,' from which I hope you may both, in a happy domestic home, find, every day, more and more enjoyment together."

When Lady Edith thus mentioned the Bible, a momentary pang of agitation flitted over the lovely young countenance of Bessie; there was a quick nervous tremour in her lip, her eyes fell, and she became painfully thoughtful. A burning hectic flush had now settled on her scarlet cheek, while happy tears fell, pearl following pearl, over her agitated face. Robert now, with a pleasing mixture of respect and attachment, expressed to Lady Edith, in a tone of manly frankness, his pleasure at her promise to be present at his marriage, and also at her welcome gift.

Bessie, while her handsome young lover spoke thus, his eyes glittering with enthusiasm, cast a wild and tremulous glance around, and then covered her face with her hands, which visibly trembled. Tears suddenly rolled in torrents down her cheeks, and her whole countenance, which assumed an expression of bitter compunction, became convulsed by most unaccountable agitation." Robert, with a look of tender interest, grasped her hand, saying in accents of happy confidence, "You must shed no tears of sorrow, or even of joy, now, Bessie, without my knowing the reason why."

Still no answer came from Bessie, though she attempted in a little faint voice to speak, and sobbed as if her heart would break. Robert, drawing her arm within his own, with a look of trustful happiness, hurried her away, after once more renewing his grateful thanks to Lady Edith, while Bessie's blushing face was like a whole garden of roses.

"Well," exclaimed Lady Edith, turning to Beatrice with a smile of benevolent satisfaction, "Robert Carre has indeed shown a most generous and disinterested affection, for which I hope he will be rewarded by long years of the best happiness which God bestows on his people in this world—and that is home-happiness. There was something in the young bride's manner at the last not quite satisfactory, and yet I can scarcely say why. Did you not observe a strange anxious expression in her face? Robert and Bessie are both very superior in refinement of mind and heart to their natural position, and no sight in nature is so delightful as the well-founded felicity of two such young people, beginning life, as I trust they will continue and end it, with a fervent devotion to that God who gives them all things so richly to enjoy."

CHAPTER XVII.

"May nothing new happen to you."—*Spanish Compliment.*

LADY EDITH continued to hear occasionally from Lady Stratharden, and every letter plunged her into a deeper gloom respecting Allan, which she did not attempt to conceal from Beatrice, so acutely a sharer in all her sorrow and suspense on his account. It was evident how severely the young girl felt a cessation of all intercourse with the only companion of her childhood, and the dearest object of her affections. Little as she had hoped that circumstances could admit of their union,—still she had never contemplated a sudden termination to their brother-and-sister friendship, which involved a separation for time and eternity of every hope and of every feeling. Now she saw a dark gulf unexpectedly opened between them, that seemed widening every day, and many a tear, as well as many a prayer, testified in secret to the depth of her anguish at this threatened change.

Lady McAlpine, like all new converts, was astonishing and perplexing the Pope himself by the wild extremes of her enthusiasm about relics and images, while occupying her whole time in working dresses for the priest, in planning patterns for encaustic tiles, and in singing litanies to the Virgin; evidently in a perfect delirium of spiritual intoxication, believing everything she was told with all her might, and worshipping at random whatever a priest placed before her. What influence such a mother had been able to obtain, with the assistance of his guardian uncle, over Allan, no one could divine, but Lady Stratharden wrote that he seemed sunk in the deepest melancholy, his very heart appeared withered, and he had wasted away almost to a shadow, but that the attentions of his mother, his uncle, and tutor, were so assiduous, it was impossible for any one else to become intimately acquainted with him. The only exception to this rule was one of which Lady Stratharden was not herself then aware. Her own daughter, Lady Anne Darlington, an only child, and the heiress to boundless estates, had been secretly admitted with her governess into the very inner sanctuary of Lady McAlpine's boudoir, and there, from day to day, when Lady Anne and her governess Miss Turton were supposed to be sketching in the Coliseum or picture-hunting in the Vatican, they were shut up in close conclave with Cardinal Albertini at Lady McAlpine's, or singing chants with Sir Allan, become the finest amateur performer at Rome.

Beatrice had now many friends, and even many admirers, though none to whom she gave the slightest encouragement. Clanmarina, which had formerly been as aloof from the general world as Robinson Crusoe's island, or that of Prospero and Miranda, had recently be-

come an object of admiring curiosity to English tourists: therefore the road was occasionally strewed with horsemen, sometimes even a stray chariot whirled up to the pretty little village-inn, and the mail-gig often enclosed a stranger come to enjoy some days' fishing in the beautiful salmon-stream. Many of these wanderers brought letters to Lady Edith, who, on the slightest hint of a recommendation from any mutual acquaintance, invited them to her most elegant and comfortable of cottages. Those who entered Heatherbrae strangers went away friends, and very frequently the old associates of Sir Evan would wander out of their way in passing through the Highlands, once more to see Lady Edith, and then the days they at first proposed to spend with her extended very frequently to weeks. Such was the charm of Lady Edith's grave, intellectual conversation contrasted with the delightful vivacity of Beatrice, that none ever left off their intercourse at Heatherbrae without regret, and it grew quite a fashion among English tourists to rave about the enchanting scenery and society of Clanmarina.

Thus Beatrice became early accustomed to intelligent conversation on the most improving of all models, with a circle of enlightened friends, living at home, and exchanging at leisure all the thoughts, facts, and feelings, which interested them at the moment; but as time advanced, she and Lady Edith could not but become sensible of an increasing change in both the manner and appearance of their favourite neighbours and associates, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, who grew daily more reserved and silent, speaking, when they did speak, in a disparaging tone of their own once-venerated Church. "Scottish Episcopacy is in a state of most apostolical poverty!" observed Mr. Clinton, with a very unusual *souçon* of contemptuous dissatisfaction in his voice, one day, "A man of university education and classical attainments is expected to maintain the position of a gentleman, and to bestow the charities of a philanthropist on a professional income such as a land-steward, or even a butler, would despise, his chapel no larger than a bathing-machine, and quite as destitute of ornament."

"Yes, Mr. Clinton," replied Lady Edith, kindly; "and I have known one intimately these many years, who has shown what a willing purse can do for the necessities of others, even in preference to his own. Long may a blessing attend, as it has long done, on your active labours!"

"I used to build all my castles in the air with the best cards in the pack, but now the paltry details of economy, and the very limited result of single-handed efforts, are truly discouraging," continued Mrs. Clinton, almost peevishly, for she had the weak side of rather liking expense, and being rather proud of doing so. "A married clergyman must work like a galley-slave. I remember the day when mine was indeed a 'stand-at-ease' life, and when I should have despised all petty savings, but now, even a penny-stamp has become an object requiring my attention."

"Well!" replied Lady Edith, kindly. "You have learned the lesson of praiseworthy economy thoroughly, Mrs. Clinton, after roughing it so cheerfully these many years, and laughing over privations which would have at first seemed incredible. You have done the work of a curate,—and the very best of curates—these many years in this neighbourhood, and I trust your home will always be as happy as you have often made the homes of others."

Allan's old tutor, Mr. Herbert, now Bishop of Inverness, was to preach the following Sunday for Mr. Clinton, and after his arrival he could not withhold his astonishment at several changes which had been recently made in the little chapel once so familiar to him. A pair of gigantic candlesticks now adorned the altar, with the tall wax candles burning in the sunshine, and it was a deep inscrutable mystery to the whole congregation how they came there.

"The gift of a friend," replied Mr. Clinton, colouring deeply, when asked about their origin, and evidently determined to give no explanation. "I should be sorry to remain in the diocese of any bishop narrow-minded enough to object against this ancient custom of the Church."

"Of what Church?" asked Bishop Herbert. "There are practices and doctrines creeping into our Church, Mr. Clinton, so perfectly Popish, as if sanctioned by our Articles, would make me think that Ridley and Latimer must have been martyrs by mistake! Those candles at the altar in our morning-service are a useless decoration that must be removed."

Beatrice, full of pleasant anticipation at the thought of once more hearing the early instructor of her childhood, walked with buoyant animation beside Lady Edith and the Bishop towards chapel; her deep azure blue eyes sparkling beneath her cottage bonnet, and her light plaid of the McAlpine tartan fluttering in the breeze over her snow-white dress. Beneath the vivid rays of a resplendent sunshine the autumn leaves spun and quivered in the gale, while Beatrice herself looked smilingly around on the bright landscape, as if her life had been one long sunshiny day of gladness and good-humour. Their path led the party under a long array of overarching oak-trees, hanging beside a glassy stream, which pursued its indolent career towards the ocean in sunshine and shadow for many miles. A thousand marshy wild plants were strewn on the mossy banks, and several large white water-lilies lay like ivory cups upon the blue surface of the river.

At a low white gate, surmounted by the foliage of a venerable tree, which led into part of the Eaglescairn deer-forest, Lady Edith observed the graceful distinguished-looking young man, whom Beatrice had lately by mistake summoned into the garden, leaning over the bars in a careless lounging attitude, lashing down the leaves with his riding-whip and looking particularly inclined to whistle. With an expression of somewhat contemptuous indifference he eyed the clustering groups of country people hurrying

earnestly forward, but it was very obvious he had no intention to follow.

The stranger had a wearied look of nothing-to-do ennui. He seemed as if amusement itself could not amuse him, and as if he would willingly have quarrelled with the world, himself, and everybody around, had it not been too much trouble. The incognito was lazily patting one of his two pointers, while indulging in a most luxurious yawn, when suddenly, his eye falling on the brilliant, smiling countenance of Beatrice, he started with visible delight, and his whole aspect became instantly transformed into an expression of respectful admiration.

When the stranger had clandestinely glanced a second time at the surpassingly beautiful Beatrice, as if to assure himself that so lovely a vision was real, his countenance in a moment lost all its vacancy, becoming vivid with animated pleasure. Beatrice meanwhile strolled onward, so occupied in talking to her venerable companion, Bishop Herbert, that she gave a mere passing half-absent glance towards the lounging gentleman at the gate, and proceeded, perfectly unconscious that she had made now, as formerly, an impression of ineffaceable admiration on one who was not usually given to praise.

Scarcely were Beatrice and Lady Edith seated as usual in their pew, before a beadle ushered in the stranger; and it was evident to all concerned that his coming to church must have been rather a sudden idea, as his costume was more suited to the deer-forest than to the chapel, being a complete suit of border plaid, and even the cap he brought in his hand was of the same material. With a certain air of habitual distinction, he was, nevertheless, a person who might have been met anywhere a hundred times, Lady Edith thought, without his personal appearance exciting a single criticism.

Having entered the pew with a look of respectful deference to the ladies, as if asking permission to do so, he seated himself in the only vacant place, next to Beatrice, and occupied his attention in gazing around the church with an air of so much wonder and curiosity, that it seemed almost to Lady Edith as if he had never been in one before, which conjecture became more and more confirmed by his subsequent conduct and aspect. There appeared a general air of supercilious contempt in his dark scornful eyes after having completed this survey of the plain neat unadorned building, and with a rather disdainful smile, he folded his arms, sat back, and looked exceedingly bored. Still he glanced occasionally with an expression of clandestine interest at Beatrice, though, after waiting a few minutes till the service began, he became so restlessly impatient, that there seemed every probability of his hurriedly departing. When the congregation stood up to begin, Lady Edith so far did the honours of her pew as to offer the stranger her prayer book, which he politely accepted,

and immediately made a vain attempt to find the places. He dived into the middle, then looked at the title-page, ran his eyes over the list of contents, tried again, and at length with a look of polite entreaty held it out to Beatrice, who, blushing with surprise, opened up the right place, and quietly returned it to him. After this, for several minutes all went right, but again he was completely at a loss; therefore, closing the volume, and giving a shrug of despairing indifference, he contented himself afterwards, with merely standing, sitting, or kneeling as others did, with mechanical precision.

When the appointed chapters were about to be read, the stranger, seeing Beatrice's large Bible open on the desk, bent forward that they might read it together, which secretly astonished her; and in any other place, she would have felt actually diverted at the sort of easy gentlemanlike assurance with which he made himself so completely at home among those to whom his very name was unknown. The stranger's singing too, when he joined in the hymns, appeared beautiful beyond description, as the quality of his voice was so rich, deep, and full, that Beatrice had never heard its equal for pathos, melody, and expression, while he had evidently both science and taste.

When the Bishop, old and full of years, in a voice of majestic energy and pathos, announced the sublime and holy tenets of his church; the words rolled forth with a pomp and power of intellectual eloquence which riveted the imagination, convinced the judgment, and gained the heart of every individual who listened. Long and thoughtfully he inculcated a deep study of the infallible Scriptures, which speak to the universal heart of human nature, being clear and sublime as nature itself. The same Great Being, he said, was the author of both, making both so easy to the simplest understanding that a child can find enough in either for the nourishment of life, though in each there are depths and mysteries, which ages of study by the wisest heads cannot entirely fathom. The Bishop aroused the highest and noblest emotions of which the human heart can be conscious and to which every human heart must respond, while proving that all which is founded on Bible truth in the Romish system is equally held by Protestants; who reject only, with a just abhorrence, the disfiguring excrescences engrafted on the sound body of truth by Papists, who endeavoured to subvert the sacred volume while keeping it from general readers, and teaching that all faith or morals consist in a blind, unquestioning, slavish obedience to the priest.

"The Jesuits," he said, "now rule in the Vatican; for even the Pope obeys the Jesuit Cardinals, who kiss his foot but tie his hands, while their object is to enthrall the free and intellectual population of Great Britain under the same iron yoke of ignorance, idolatry, and real infidelity as Italy, Portugal, Spain, and other countries, drenched in guilt and superstition."

When the Bishop's eloquent voice became hushed there followed a solemn silence that might be felt, while the congregation seemed

unwilling to let their attention be released from the influence of a mind so commanding in its power, so rousing in its appeals, and so majestic in its kindest sympathies.

While a collection took place after service for the village library and schools, Beatrice observed the glitter of gold in the stranger's hand, as he clandestinely dropped in his contribution, and soon after he followed, with an air of thoughtful gravity, when the congregation slowly dispersed. They streamed out from the church without looking up or speaking, for each individual was impressed by the venerable Bishop's sacred admonitions, so that they felt a newly awakened consciousness how awful is life, with its responsibilities, its fears, and even its hopes, and "what a mystery to man is man."

Lady Edith and Beatrice were exchanging recollections of much in the sermon, by which they had been peculiarly interested, in explanation of those venerable certainties which they hoped never to forget, when their lingering thoughtful steps were overtaken by the stranger, who politely opened the church-yard gate to let them pass, and bowing with the easy self-importance of one accustomed always to be cordially welcomed, he said,

"May I be permitted, Lady Edith, to escort you towards home? Do not, I entreat you, consider mine a case of Popish aggression, though this has been, in fact, my first appearance within any Protestant church,—not, I hope, my last. You must have perceived that the service was new to me, and, shall I add, very interesting. The majestic simplicity of an intellectual service, unaccompanied by incense, images, pantomime, and repetitions, was new to one like myself, long accustomed to Italian Cathedrals, and long wearied of Italian mummeries, where I never heard any preacher fit to dot the *i's*, or to stroke the *l's* of our venerable friend to-day."

"You are lately from abroad?" asked Lady Edith, with polite curiosity.

"Yes! I arrived by a most romantic conveyance last week—the mail-gig," replied the incognito, with a humorous glance at Beatrice. "But," he continued, in a tone of perfect frankness, and of some gravity, "my motives in going to church were not so serious as my feelings in coming away. Let me acknowledge that, having been disgusted at Rome lately by the fooleries of a monastic establishment into which I was inveigled, and with all the frivolous baubles and purchased indulgences offered me if I would become a superstitious devotee, I have found that the best cure for Romanism is a residence at Rome."

"No wonder!" observed Lady Edith: "a Papist buying absolutions might well say, 'I cannot afford to keep a conscience,' and there are very few people who do, after they have begun to buy pardons for their sins as they would buy envelopes for their letters."

"At Rome infidelity abounds even more than popery," added the

stranger. "In my present state of mind, with every confidence in religion shaken to its very centre, my first visit to a Protestant church to-day has shown me how reason and intellect may be united with a dignified simplicity in devotion, worthy of man and his Maker. This may, therefore, be the most fortunate day of my life, which has laid the foundation-stone of our acquaintance, and many yet happier hours for me might follow if you will allow of my improving our introduction into an intimacy."

"But," replied Lady Edith, looking round with astonished though good-humoured perplexity, at her free and easy companion, "there has been no introduction yet, and I cultivate no acquaintances except those introduced to me by mutual friends."

"Quite right! I shall bring my testimonials printed to-morrow. Lord Eaglescairn, who knows all the world, knows even me!" replied the stranger, humorously. "Meanwhile, as nothing on earth is so awkward as the sound of one's own name, and as I am the very shyest of mortals, pray let me continue for to day, 'The Great Unknown,' or I shall call myself, if you insist on a name, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien? In my own boyhood, years ago, I delighted to make acquaintances, just like running against a post, by accident. My chief pleasure was to read about handsome romantic looking incognitos, and I have a whim of being one myself now!"

To Beatrice, the stranger's rallying, gentlemanlike self-confidence, was, beyond measure, amusing; while she grew more and more convinced that he held no ordinary position in society. There was an air of high hereditary distinction, almost of hauteur, in the habitual expression of his consequential looking features, but so qualified by the sportive vivacity of his manner, that his unadulterated nonsense was piquant and pleasing in the extreme, while she became delighted to see Lady Edith restored to some of her former vivacity, by this rencontre with one so odd and original.

"Now," continued the stranger, "every man has one subject on which he excels, and my forte at present, being so lately returned from abroad, and speaking several dozen of languages with ease, is to enlighten people on foreign politics, you understand. Do I make myself quite intelligible?"

"Perfectly so; but that is not a subject on which I bestow much thought. One must, in this wide world, remain ignorant of something," answered Lady Edith. "My little pittance of mind cannot embrace the whole universe of knowledge, therefore I do not often trouble myself with the affairs of all nations. Foreigners know best themselves how they wish to be governed, and will not consult my wisdom."

"Though you are, I have no doubt, wiser than the wisest of them," replied the stranger jestingly, "I am, myself, a perfect fanatic in politics; and have an undeveloped genius which will one day fit me to be prime minister—or, at least, a clerk at the Admiralty."

"You have studied the deepest depths of political economy, I presume."

"No one has ever yet measured my depth. I am at the bottom of every art and science, from thimble-rig to political economy. I can remember or forget anything on the shortest notice, as it suits me; and am determined to know nothing in life but what is pleasant. My next publication shall be an octavo volume, to show how the poor can be made to feel happier than the rich, and to keep their carriages."

"You are a perfect Macaulay, I suppose?" asked Lady Edith smiling, "and ready for first class honours in Hume and Gibbon."

"Not exactly. My favourite historians are Shakspeare, Waverley, and some of the new operas; Lucrezia Borgia, for instance, and Marie Stuart. Pray," added the stranger, turning to Beatrice, "how do you like 'Les Huguenots?' and are you an admirer of Jenny Lind?"

"I never was at an opera in my life," replied Beatrice, blushing with graceful timidity on finding herself addressed; while the stranger watched with clandestine admiration the little conflict of shyness and amusement which brightened her countenance, as she added, "I should like much to hear Jenny Lind for once."

"Then comfort yourself for not having seen her, that life has still something to show. It is a perfect trance of delight the first time, but I tired even of her, as I do of everybody and of everything. One goes to the opera to be bored, rather than stay to be bored at home. If anything can add a feather to the wing of time it is a help!"

The young man's voice became saddened as he spoke, and his countenance for some moments assumed an aspect of seriousness; but suddenly shaking this off, he asked if the ladies ever happened by chance to see young Sir Allan McAlpine, whose property was in that neighbourhood.

How strange that accidental question sounded in the ear of Lady Edith, and yet more so in that of Beatrice! Did she ever see Allan? Her own beloved Allan! The inseparable companion of her childhood! He who had once wished to devote to her his whole remaining life!

Before Beatrice had arranged all her thoughts and feelings on the subject, Lady Edith replied in the affirmative, and asked the stranger with anxious curiosity in return, if he also was a friend of Sir Allan's?

"Oh! most intimate. He was never out of my sight, until this unlucky whim somehow suggested itself to him, of becoming either a Jesuit priest or a monk of La Trappe, taking a cord and cross instead of a belt and sword. His mother, you know, is a widow. I do not wonder at that, as no man could survive long with so tiresome a woman; and she would sacrifice her son to Moloch, if the doing so pleased her favourite cardinal."

"I wonder at both Sir Allan's uncle and mother conspiring against him," said Lady Edith in a tone of mournful musing. "Mr. Ambrose indeed has long torn himself root and branch from every human tie, and has no scruple in tearing up those of others; but for a mother to wish that her only son should become a solitary unit in the creation, giving up all the dearer connexions of life,—it is incredible!"

"These sly Papists got hold of my friend McAlpine while his heart was wrung with grief for a kind uncle, of whom he used to tell me many interesting anecdotes,—a very worthy man I do not doubt; but nobody's uncles live for ever, and why should he? Sir Allan burying himself out of the world will not bring Sir Evan back to it! Since McAlpine took this Jesuitical turn, however, we have been as every way different as the black and white kings on a chess-board. I thought it a duty to myself to avoid his society, for these things are so catching that the victims should be put under quarantine. Are you condescending enough to agree with me? I see you are, and that confirms my original opinion of your superlative good sense; but my account of McAlpine seems to have brought you to what is termed 'a dead stare.'

Lady Edith and Beatrice felt secretly so overwhelmed by this perfectly authentic confirmation of their worst apprehensions respecting Allan, that not a word or an exclamation had escaped from the lips of either. Beatrice nevertheless became livid as death, and leaned heavily on the arm of her greatly agitated benefactress; and still the rattling stranger rattled carelessly on, little heeding the sensation caused by his eccentric nonsense.

"I believed in the liquefying of the blood of St. Januarius and such conjuring tricks once, though I cannot now and never shall."

"The power of chemistry is marvellous," replied Lady Edith. "Drawings done with sensitive ink, that appear and disappear, would seem to any uninstructed peasant quite supernatural."

"Yes!" replied the young stranger; "and did you ever see Monsieur Robin produce twelve different liquids from one bottle? In fact, the priests when trying to make me believe in winking pictures and in solid chapels flying to Rome through the air, have ended,—low be it spoken,—in making me believe nothing marvellous that they can assert about St. Bridget or St. Dominick. I fell at once from Romanism to Indifferentism. Still, ass as I am, I can bray sensibly enough sometimes, and it does grieve me to think that this fine old castle will so soon belong to the monks. They are persuading McAlpine that he should hack and tear every tie of earthly affection, that he must overrun this little village with proselyting priests, that he must give wooden images instead of Bibles to your simple clansmen, and that being the last heir of entail to this property, his imperative duty is to restore this whole estate to the Papal Church."

"I never give my opinion upon any subject! never; but I do say

that monks and nuns should be rendered incapable of succeeding to fortunes or estates; for it is not they who acquire them, but the foreign priest to whom they are no relations, but blinded slaves," said Lady Edith. "If what you say be true of Sir Allan, he has sold himself body and soul to the Pope. Clanmarina is no more his property than it is mine; for Father Eustace will leave not a feather unplucked from his wing."

"The priests know McAlpine's value to a shilling, and well have they laid the trap," replied the stranger in a tone of bitter satire. "I saw, during my farewell visit to McAlpine, who always was one degree too good for this world, a plan before him of the gorgeous chapel to be built here for Presbyterian Papists, soon and certainly to be converted by fair means or by very foul ones. They were trying to persuade him that it would be a sin to marry some charming young girl,—a perfect vision of muslin, lace, ringlets, and blue ribbons, with whom McAlpine as an almost boy had exchanged bouquets and vows of constancy, and had finally deposited his heart before leaving home."

Lady Edith suppressed a groan of anguish, and clasped more closely to her side the arm of Beatrice, which quivered with emotion, but she articulated a few words to encourage her communicative companion in his heedless volubility, while he little guessed the powerful sensations of grief and astonishment which his words were creating, and which rushed like a stormy wind through the agitated mind of Beatrice, prostrating in sorrowful desolation every hope that was dearest to her in life.

"In no foreign Cathedral, full of paintings, music, and perfumes, did I ever feel my own mind so healthily ventilated, or so brightly illuminated with the clear daylight of truth, so called into vivid action, or so seriously impressed with a consciousness of immortality, as by the quiet intellectual service to-day, not directed to my bodily senses but to my invisible soul;" continued the stranger in a tone of reflection that became him well. "Your worthy Bishop announced his intention to receive at the schoolroom to-morrow those of the congregation who wish to hear some discussions respecting my own Romish Church,—or let me rather say the Church to which my family belong,—for I scarcely dare assert that, in my careless way of thinking, I belong to any church—and I shall do myself the justice to hear what so gifted and good a man as your Bishop has to say."

The young sportsman gracefully lifted his hat above his head with a farewell look of polite admiration at Beatrice, and stood with it in his hand until both ladies, their thoughts full of grief for Allan, wished him a cordial but agitated farewell, and closing the little white gate that led into the garden they hurriedly vanished.

There appeared an inimitable grace in the young stranger's most ordinary bow, while the expression on his face was a tessellated mixture of humour and respect; but it was scarcely observed by

the ladies, as words would be wasted in an attempt to describe what were their increased feelings of anguish the longer they considered the mournful but only too authentic account of Allan's most calamitous perversion to Romanism. It appeared to Beatrice a frightful dream that he—her own beloved Allan—should be the person whose influence over Clanmarina hereafter Lady Edith would most have to fear, and whose altered principles must render him an alien to her own confidence and affection, and a willing victim to that delusive superstition by which body and soul are confiscated as slaves to the will of another, extinguishing even the high and holy privilege of thought.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for their guide."

COWPER

WHEN Beatrice thought over all that had been revealed respecting Allan, she felt as if suffering in a painful trance from which she could not awaken. Her well-regulated mind had always most carefully banished every hope connected with Allan's more peculiar attachment to herself, because the conviction was engrained into her very being that the friendless orphan, who owed life and all things to Sir Evan, could best show her gratitude to his memory by attending to what she believed had been his intentions, that she and Allan should be no more to each other than brother and sister friends: but very bitter tears were mingled with her prayers for one, now and always the dearest object of her unacknowledged affections. Long after 'did the thought of his apostasy steal away the bloom from her cheek, the lustre from her eye, and the buoyancy from her step. In the simple life of Beatrice it was a great and most impressive event next day, and full of pleasant excitement, when she found herself at the school-room with Lady Edith to meet the Bishop, whose high strain of eloquence on the previous day yet reverberated on her ear and on her heart. His conversation with Lady Edith and Mr. Clinton was full of life and without a thought of display, abounding in keen observation, in classical elegance, and in that deep experience of the world and of mankind, gathered in a long life of active duty.

By degrees a circle became formed beside the Bishop, while Beatrice, glancing round to see how all the party were placed, saw in the most distant corner of the room a pair of the brightest eyes in the world fixed on herself with a look of unmistakeable admiration which brought a scarlet blush to her cheek. The singular young

stranger of the previous day was evidently crouching out of sight, as if conscious of having placed himself in a false position by coming at all to this congregational meeting assembled to welcome their old pastor, and yet he was evidently most anxious not to lose a word that might fall from the Bishop, who now addressed those nearest him, saying in a tone of cheerful benignity,—

“You have often heard, my friends, of that most respectable individual, ‘the oldest inhabitant.’ Perhaps I am not only the oldest in Clanmarina, but in the kingdom, seeing that more than eighty-six years of deep experience have taught me its dangers and its sorrows, till nothing now is left me but the undying hope of a world to come. Who does not often ask himself,—Why are we brought into this world, and why are we taken out of it? Life is an awful gift, which we have each received, and must each sooner or later resign; but mine has now reached its latest verge. Years and infirmities tell me that this must probably be my last visit to so distant a part of my diocese; and before the grave closes between me and every earthly duty, I have desired once more to warn you all of the evils and dangers fast approaching your own homes. I cannot live to share them with you, but I would willingly die to-morrow to shield you and all those I love from such perplexities as are approaching. The curtain of history is now rising over a deep tragedy, in which every true-hearted Briton must bear a part, to defend or to lose his all. An Italian flag has been unfurled within the heart of our great metropolis, and bold defiance bid to our laws and religion, therefore all must now be actively true to the flag of old England. Like Thomas à Becket, a Cardinal asserts in England now the right divine of Popes to govern wrong, and would have you build on the most fatal of quicksands your hope for time and for an endless eternity——”

The stranger, evidently roused to the deepest interest, now stole out from his obscure retreat and noiselessly placed himself close behind Lady Edith, in a position more advantageously to see and hear the venerable old Bishop, whose voice for one short moment faltered with emotion; but instantly recovering himself, he continued in a tone of dignified firmness, till his eye in glancing from face to face suddenly rested on the young stranger, when with a start of evident astonishment he paused, looked again, and became obviously much perplexed.

During the whole of his subsequent address, the Bishop’s attention seemed again and again fixed with wondering interest on the distinguished looking young stranger, to whom at length he seemed almost entirely to direct his words; for the incognito’s eyes appeared to exercise the fascination of a serpent over all who once caught his brilliant glance, while the whole expression of his countenance became instinct with genius and vivacity.

“It becomes daily more evident, my friends,” continued the Bishop, “from the silent progress of Jesuitism during the last few

years in this country, that once again there must hereafter be a death-struggle in Britain for the possession of your Bibles and of your consciences. Men who are indifferent on the subject will tell you, that our ancient adversary the Pope is now a mere wandering old priest, obliged lately to escape from his own subjects disguised as a livery servant, and who is yet protected only by the bayonets of a foreign republic; but Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea will very soon be re-acted in this country, if we trust in such plausible representations. The Pope seems crippled in all his resources, and yet never for centuries has his power been so influential in England as at this moment; and the danger you have all to apprehend is not from the open honest warfare of soldiers on a battle-field, or its extent might be measured and avoided. No! it is the elandestine, the marvellous but imperceptible expansion of the Jesuits around us which ought to be feared, and their masquerading manœuvres, while Protestants sleep on in a vague ignominious dream of safety. The warfare of opinions and principles is stealing surreptitiously into the family circle of many a husband and parent, who believes he has fortified his home and his children impregnably against jesuitical influence; but let all now make assurance doubly sure."

"Right enough!" muttered the stranger aside to Lady Edith and Beatrice. "The Jesuits are like the lily of the valley; once planted, no power of man can trace their progress or entirely root them out. They grow and spread in all directions, silently and unnoticed, appearing always where least expected, and not very much wanted."

"A Dean of our Church once said," replied Lady Edith, in an under tone, "that the Pope, when weeding his garden, throws the worst weeds over our English wall, and there are tears in many a family now which would sorrowfully testify to their progress."

"In Europe," whispered the stranger, "there are more than a million of priests,—a Popish militia, thoroughly trained and most skilfully drilled, with no other earthly tie but their order, who form an invisible army, with which the Pope is gaining victories every day. His chief energy in recent times is directed to the wealthy English, who are entrapped by secret devices, strange beyond the wildest dreams of romance. One young and beautiful cousin of mine is nibbling now towards the bars of a convent, and I tell her, if once she enters the confessional such an insight will be gained into her character and secret thoughts, that there will remain no limit to the power of Father Eustace to seduce or to terrify her. She will, I greatly fear, break her mother's heart, and soon abandon every divinely appointed duty, to be employed in working dresses for the priests, and in making delirious proselytes like herself."

"Careless men," continued the Bishop earnestly, "consider this a mere question of religion for the clergy, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing to general society; but no! it is an attempt, my

friends, on the part of Rome, chiefly through female influence, to gain in this country supreme power, as well as unlimited wealth. This the Popish priest will succeed at last in doing, unless the Protestant garrison, aware that they have adversaries within and without, be each man at his post, as alert to defend as the assailants are to attack. Their opponents seek not religious equality but political predominancy; therefore it is the interest even of infidels to maintain the independent dignity of man as his God created him, relying, we Protestants believe, on the guidance, not of men or angels, but of God's own Spirit, and of God's own word."

"Very different from the frauds, the deceptions, and the juggler's tricks I have seen at Rome, to entice and deceive wealthy and weak-minded converts;" muttered the stranger indignantly between his teeth, while the aged Bishop paused to recover himself. "Their slavery becomes worse than that of the negroes, for no despotism on earth is equal to that of a Popish priest usurping the place of God. The Inquisition is in very full work at Rome even now, and most justly has it been called 'The Master-piece of Satan.'"

"Think not, my friends," continued the Bishop, "that these warnings of impending danger to your religion are the produce of an over-anxious mind. You hear now the deliberate opinion of one whose own work on earth is done, but whose last public address to each and all of his former flock is one solemn injunction. Were you to hear for certain that the plague will devastate this village to-morrow, or that an invasion of foreign soldiers is to take place here to-day, or that an enemy's fleet is anchored in your bay, or that an earthquake will level your houses to the ground in an hour, still take courage, for your eternal all is not yet jeopardized and much might remain. Mutual confidence and affection would enable you to bear the worst together, and your expectation of being re-united in a better world might make even a separation full of hope. Let your deepest fears, then, be reserved and your most anxious precautions taken against those Thugs of Christendom, who murder the soul by steeping it in crime as an act of devotion."

"There is a coming struggle before you," continued the venerable Bishop, "against a power, the triumph of which would take from yourselves and your children all innocent natural enjoyments, the gifts of a benevolent God to his own people. Beware of that foreign priest who would confiscate your very souls, along with your bodies and minds,—who would embezzle your fortunes, destroy your liberties, and who would induce you to shut yourselves up in monastic cells, excluding the light of day, the freedom of thought, the use of speech, ease of body, and refreshment from sleep. He would interpose a priest between you and the confidence of your wife, the obedience of your children, even the right to utter truth itself if an evasion would better serve this Papal usurpation. My friends, had our all-powerful God required such wretched automations with nothing in them but obedience, a set of puppets, the

wires and strings all managed by priests, would He not at once have formed so inferior a race of slaves, rather than giving us the glorious light of conscience, of thought and of intellect, bid us extinguish them all in the dark waters of Popish oblivion?"

"Prodigiously true," said the stranger, turning for the first time to Beatrice, in a tone of animated frankness. "In my own family, the Papists have begun, as in old times, their death-bed robberies of the old, when dying men, instead of seeing a pistol held to their heads, have the horrors of an imaginary purgatory presented to their terrified imaginations. Last month, when I was absent, the Jesuits very nearly frightened my aged uncle into disinheriting me. The conspiracy seemed within five minutes of succeeding; it really was neck and neck between me and the Jesuits. The good old soul died, pen in hand, before his will was completely signed; and I really think he did it on purpose, for I was a great favourite."

The countenance of Beatrice became illuminated with a smile of such intelligent interest, that the stranger continued to rattle on at a hand-gallop, with his laughing eyes fixed on her smiling features, as he added, "Now, my worthy uncle used only some months ago to rave against the priests, and tell me that the only object for which he would accept a seat in parliament was, to bring in a bill of his own. It provided that when monks and nuns became dead to the world by taking monastic vows, all their property should go immediately to their nearest sane relation. Stringent laws can alone protect old men like my uncle, or wealthy young ladies like my cousin, against being victimized by that red man from Rome."

Parliament having been recently dissolved, a general election was expected about this time to take place. Every borough and county was to be keenly contested, every seat disputed; and nothing could exceed the excitement produced by the two watchwords of party feeling, always the most exciting to a Scottish mob,—“No Popery!” and “Cheap Bread!” The most virulent feelings of opposition had always been prevalent in Clanmarina against Lord Eaglescairn’s candidate, whoever or whatever he might be; and no words could describe the contemptuous disbelief with which the Cairngorum tenantry received an assertion from Father Eustace, that a candidate was coming from abroad whom they would all unanimously support, in accordance with a nomination from the steward of Lord Eaglescairn.

“It is a moral impossibility,” said old Carre of Daisybank. “How could the priest expect us to believe so wild and idle a report? In the show of hands, not one shall appear for the Eaglescairn candidate. Who can this anonymous man of straw possibly be?”

The zeal of Father Eustace in canvassing could scarcely have been exceeded by that of an Irish priest. He denounced by name from the altar all who did not promise their votes to the anonymous candidate, who was to support the Popish interest; and he cursed

the cattle, the potatoes, the families, and the relatives of all who hesitated in pledging themselves to implicit obedience.

Meetings were held among the farmers at Clanmarina, speeches made, resolutions passed, deputations arranged, addresses drawn up; and with one universal shout of applause, they received the toast given, with a look of tremendous import,—“Success to principle and Protestantism!”—by Mr. Carre, when they mustered in his farm-house, where he daily boasted of being himself an attached, honest, true-hearted, twenty-five shillings in the pound tenant of the McAlpines.

“A helping hand to the Protestant candidate, whoever he be,” exclaimed old Carre eagerly, “and a cold shoulder to the Papist, if he were my own son!”

The ancient custom, long since established by Sir Evan, of giving a tenants’ dinner on rent-day, was duly observed by the guardians of Sir Allan; therefore, as in former and happier times, clansmen, from every extremity of the Cairngorum estate, were seated round a hospitable board, which groaned beneath the weight of sirloins and saddles of mutton, rounds and barons of beef. The cloth was removed, and Sir Allan’s new factor, a whimsical-looking stranger, who had the strutting air of self-consequence which seems natural to little men, advanced to say, in the most original style, that he was “unaccustomed to public speaking. He begged, however, to propose the health of the day, their absent landlord, but not,” Mr. Gordon announced, “to be absent long, as the young Chief meant to celebrate his coming of age, some weeks hence, among his own people.”

Long and deafening was the acclamation with which this announcement was welcomed, and joy beamed in every honest face, as the tenantry exchanged smiles of heartfelt congratulation, in the happy prospect that bright days were again dawning for Clanmarina, and the place of Sir Evan about to be in some degree supplied to his clansmen; therefore, with cheers of grateful delight, the assembled crowd waved their tall Highland bonnets in the air, responding with their whole hearts and voices to the three times three, or nine times nine, of the factor, who now considered himself a second Demosthenes.

A pause ensued;—for Mr. Gordon, looking ambiguously round, seemed greatly at a loss how to continue his diplomatic speeches. At length, however, in another blaze of eloquence, he mentioned the probability of a coming election, and intimated his belief that their young landlord himself might probably offer himself as a candidate, trusting much to the long-tried attachment of his clansmen and tenantry.

Again the air was rent with enthusiastic hurras, and loud above every voice in the joyful crowd was heard that of old Carre of Daisybank, exclaiming, in accents of ardent excitement, “Hurra for The McAlpine! hurra for the Protestant church, and down with Popery! down with the Eaglescairn candidate!”

Every clansman stood up,—his bonnet off, his glass high in the air, his countenance glittering with enthusiasm—when Mr. Gordon, slightly stammering, now added, in a deprecatory tone, but trying to assume a bold matter-of-course look, “Before I sit down, let me add, that Mr. Carre has made a slight mistake in his toast. The candidate nominated on the Eaglescairn interest is—is—Sir Allan McAlpine.”

A silence of several minutes ensued—a very perfect silence; every countenance altered; glances of astonishment and consternation were exchanged; each man looked to his neighbour with an expression of anxious distrust, and old Carre, replacing his glass untasted on the table, and putting his hat on his head, gloomily sat down.

“It is as we feared—as we were told!” observed Robert Carre to his father, in accents of vehement independence; “and dear as the name of McAlpine and the memory of Sir Evan are to us all, we have a yet dearer name and a yet higher interest to serve. The choice is a sorrowful one to make; but if Sir Allan has really become a Papist, he has become our enemy—an enemy to God and man, who must be opposed.”

“Little did I dream of living to go against Sir Evan’s family,” observed the old farmer, his voice quivering with agitation; “but if a burning stake were on the hustings for me, I would go there to support the faith of my fathers, the faith of Holy Scripture.”

“Yes,” replied Robert, manfully, “we must stand face to face with this trial, and overcome it, or be trampled as we should deserve under the toe of Rome.”

At this moment, Bessie McRonald appeared, strolling along the road, accompanied by Father Eustace, and both in such deep conversation that they were close upon the farmer and his son before either became aware of the other’s vicinity. Bessie started, as if suffering a shock of electricity, when she first perceived her young lover; and the colour rushed in torrents to her neck and face, while she endeavoured to speak in her usual tone of careless good-humour, but her eyes could not look up, and her voice was inaudible. Not so Father Eustace, who advanced to the old farmer with a bland air of most perfect self-possession on his dark, handsome features, saying, “We came here in hopes of meeting you.” Bessie started, and looked up with an expression of surprise and perplexity, by no means diminished when the priest politely added, “I now gladly resign my charge; but our young friend here seemed afraid to pass your fierce-looking bull, therefore I volunteered my escort.”

“You were not always so timid, Bessie,” observed Robert Carre, with a searching look into her agitated countenance. “I am more afraid of a Popish bull than of all the honest black cattle in our Highland meadows. Take my arm now, Bessie, and when you have taken my hand, I shall be entitled to protect you from all the dangers you do or do not fear.”

Robert was surprised to see Bessie hesitate a moment, and cast a furtive glance of apprehension and doubt, before she accepted his arm, towards Father Eustace, who was following, with a not-to-be-repulsed air of cordial deference, talking to Mr. Carre, who, wrapped in ill-humour, was very inaccessible.

On arriving at Daisybank, Father Eustace complained of such extreme fatigue, that old Carre, with surly civility, asked him to enter, and ordered up his home-made cheese and beer to refresh the weary guest. The good farmer's favourite Newfoundland dog made a strong demonstration against this Popish aggression, by various short, sharp barks, followed by a prolonged and very ominous growl, as if preparatory to a more furious onset. This his master prevented by calling him off, when after a cautious and very suspicious inspection of the intruder, Ponto stretched out his noble limbs at Mr. Carre's feet, as if to protect him, while turning his canine eyes, flashing defiance, on Father Eustace, who looked unalterably pleased, happy, and affable, while, with an almost jovial air, he sat down to the only meal that had ever been given with a grudge at Daisybank.

It was time very soon for Bessie to return home, therefore her young lover, leaving his father to act the unwilling host to the most complaisant of guests, gladly escorted her back, and observed with delight that no sooner was Bessie beyond reach of the priest's eye, than she became nearly the same animated, happy, intelligent, and affectionate girl, who had so long continued the object of his honest and devoted attachment. They spoke now of plans for the future, with many a gay jest and joyous anticipation, while Bessie's countenance was full of arch but bashful pleasure. Hours appeared like nothing to lovers so unboundedly happy, and the shades of evening were fast closing around the cottage of Bessie's mother, where Robert had stepped in for "a single moment," and stayed four hours, when a message reached him, brought by a breathless cow-herd, that his old father had been seized during dinner with a stroke of palsy, and lay dangerously ill at Daisybank, where no one was in the house but Father Eustace and the servants.

"My father! my dear, good, excellent father! this day's work has been too much for him!" exclaimed Robert, covering his face with his hands, in deep and solemn distress, as Bessie tearfully accompanied her afflicted lover to the garden gate.

Bessie had become pale as death; the words which fluttered up to her lips could not gain utterance, and again she did not look up nor speak, when her agitated lover bade her a hasty but affectionate adieu. Robert gazed at his beloved Bessie's altered expression with astonishment, for her looks had become perfectly untranslatable and perplexing. Every vestige of her recent cheerfulness had vanished; but that of course he could not wonder at, under the shock of his own affliction; yet there seemed a sudden chill towards himself in her manner, the impression of which, as he

hurried homewards, filled him with perplexity, and occupied his thoughts more than the kind-hearted son could justify to himself, when he considered the alarming and most unexpected seizure of his much-loved father. When Robert hurriedly arrived at home, he noiselessly opened the door, stole on tiptoe into his father's bedroom, and found old Carre only half unconscious, but looking with vague imbecile perplexity at Father Eustace, who knelt by his side, mumbling Latin prayers, in a low monotonous voice, and holding a small gilt cross to the lips of the feeble unresisting sufferer. Under ordinary circumstances Robert might have performed some wild and frantic action to testify his indignant rage at Father Eustace's intrusion; but, overcome by the grief of seeing his own father's idiot look, he silently sat down, and plunging his face into his hands, burst into tears of almost insupportable anguish.

Not a sound was in the room, not a whisper for several minutes, but Father Eustace having muttered a Latin benediction at the bedside, placed his ear close to the lips of old Carre, as if listening for something the patient had replied to him, and then pretending actually to have an answer, he said aloud, "Yes! yes! certainly! make your mind easy! I shall return to-morrow, as you desire it! Depend upon seeing me."

The maid who stood beside her master's bed seemed astonished, for she had heard nothing, and the old man looked up with a strange expression of terror and vacuity, but Father Eustace glided out of the house before Robert could speak the words that were rushing in an angry torrent to his lips; for it appeared perfectly evident that his father was then utterly incapable of either forming a wish, or, even if he did, of expressing it.

"Remember," said Robert earnestly, almost savagely, to the attendant maid, "that man must never darken this door again! If Father Eustace calls, as he threatened, send instantly for me wherever I am, and he shall be hurled out of this house!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"A knave 's a knave to me in every state,
Alike my scorn if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail."

POPE.

LADY EDITH being one day about to visit a family ill with typhus fever, left Beatrice at home, but as an inducement to take healthful exercise she commissioned her to visit the pleasure-grounds at Eaglescairn, where a new gardener, recently come, had proposed an occasional exchange of plants. With buoyant step, therefore, the

animated young girl set forth, carrying in her hand a small specimen of the newest Camellia in a flower-pot, for which she was to receive a young Scarlet Azalea in return.

The family at Eaglescain not being expected home for some days, Beatrice, as she scrambled over the styles and crossed the fields, felt all the excitement of a pleasant adventure in going to see what improvements had been made in the magnificent flower-beds of Eaglescain, by the new gardener, Mr. Macgregor, and in passing near Daisybank she called to inquire for old Mr. Carre, as well as to leave a gift from Lady Edith of some peculiarly fine foreign preserves.

Having passed Robert some miles before, evidently on his way to Bessie's cottage-home, she was astonished, in a quiet lane by the river's side, to see the young girl herself walking slowly and thoughtfully beside Mrs. Lorraine, who seemed talking to her with impressive earnestness and with a melo-dramatic air of mystery. Beatrice wished she could have recalled Robert from his useless errand to Clanmarina, or otherwise interrupted this ominous conference; but unable to devise any step she could feel justified in taking, she proceeded to Daisybank Farm. There, on opening the door, Beatrice was startled, and beyond all measure astonished, to find Father Eustace seated on the old farmer's bed-side, and talking to him in a tone of vehement excitement. The panic-struck maid was standing aghast before the fire, apparently terrified out of her very few senses, and the old man himself lay feebly gazing with a look of abject terror at the priest, who spoke to him in tones of terrible denunciation. Father Eustace held in his hand an image of St. Joseph, in stucco, and a very decayed looking piece of bone, to which he directed old Mr. Carre's almost vacant eye, and it became evident to Beatrice that he was vehemently exhorting the apparently dying man to some act of penitence and of meritorious sacrifice.

The old dog, which was tied up to the bed-post, lay growling defiance at Father Eustace, and on a table beside the bed, Beatrice observed a large sheet of parchment, closely written over from top to bottom. Pen and ink were placed conveniently beside it, and on the floor lay a note which she quietly picked up without any one of the deeply absorbed trio becoming conscious of her presence. This was a single line addressed to Robert Carre in a feigned hand, saying that it would be of the utmost importance to Bessie's interest and happiness if he could instantly hasten to meet her at home, as she had something of consequence to tell him. This, then, had been part of a Popish plot, to get the attached son away from his father's dying-bed! Beatrice paused over it for a moment in silent indignation, and then gliding out of the house, she hurried to the farm offices. There she sent off the swiftest footed boy in the place to fetch back his young master, and immediately afterwards, accompanied by the honest ploughman, Andrew Murray,

whom she called from his work, Beatrice noiselessly returned into the sick-room. Old Mr. Carre, looking completely idiotical, had a pen in his trembling hand; the paper lay before him, and he was supported in bed by the terrified maid, while Father Eustace, with an anxious crafty expression of countenance, held his hand. Never had Beatrice seen so perfect a picture of prostration, mental and bodily, as that of the old farmer: gazing with abject fear at the priest, who looked as threatening as death, and spoke to him in accents of stern command, while the maid gazed on Father Eustace as if under the fascination of a serpent; for no one could be within the influence of that eye and not feel it.

The heart of Beatrice seemed to stand still for a moment, and then the colour rushed into her face, flooding it with a glow of honest indignation. At this moment, she with hurried but noiseless steps glided swiftly up to the bed, and in an instant seized the pen out of Mr. Carre's hand, then snatching up the paper, which was half signed, she threw it to the stout-hearted Andrew Murray, desiring him to keep that in his custody, and never part with the document till he gave it into his young master's own hand. Beatrice, after this, sat resolutely down to await the return of Robert, determined not to leave Daisybank till she saw the old man again properly protected by his affectionate and most devoted son. The face of Father Eustace had become livid with rage at this unexpected defeat; but the dying old man feebly held out his hand to Beatrice, and whispered with a terrified glance at the dark and working face of the priest, "Will he go away? I die a Protestant. Who is that? What did he make me write? Is Robert dead? Are the undertakers come?"

"All is right now," said Beatrice, in a tone of quiet kindness which re-assured the agitated old man, though still his eyes, with an anxious scrutinizing gaze, wandered round the room; "Robert will be home soon. I shall stay here till he comes. Now try to sleep."

"Not till he goes away," replied the old man, with a shudder. "What did he give me the pen for? Is all gone—all lost? Poor Robert!"

"No! no!—all is well. Keep your mind quiet, and that man shall never, as long as the world lasts, return here again. Try to forget him."

Old Mr. Carre, with a look of devout reverence, laid his hand on the Bible, which stood by his side on the bed; then closing his languid eyes with a shudder, he remained apparently insensible, and almost fainting with weakness, as pale and immoveable as a corpse. When Robert appeared at a distance, hurrying with rapid strides towards home, Father Eustace glided noiselessly as a ghost away, and disappeared behind the offices, where soon after he was followed by Mrs. Lorraine, stealing along like a snake in the grass.

Great was the surprise of Robert to meet Bessie near his own

home, when he had gone to Clanmarina in search of her; and the young girl's astonishment was not less when told of the summons which had taken him there. She felt as if dreaming with her eyes open, unable to comprehend the apparent mistake. It was a most unaccountable, or a very mischievous hoax, they both agreed; but when they reached Daisybank together, every other feeling of surprise or perplexity was forgotten in the storm of indignation with which Robert heard from Miss Farinelli an account of the recent Papal aggression on his father's death-bed, when, amid the old farmer's sufferings and imbecility, not a sand seemed now lingering in his hour-glass.

When the dying man and his son were left together, Robert strode up and down the room like a caged lion, in his angry excitement and perplexity respecting Father Eustace's intrusion. Great agitation exhausts the organs that express it, so that while quivering in every joint with nervous tremor after her rencontre with Father Eustace, Beatrice looked externally calm as she took leave of Robert, warning him to be watchful or another parchment might yet be brought, and the whole affair be again more successfully manœuvred.

When Beatrice entered the magnificent gardens of Eaglescain, which she had very seldom seen, the gorgeous beauty of the innumerable flowers filled her with delighted astonishment. Nearly an acre of azaleas displayed one brilliant sheet of white, yellow, and scarlet blossoms, and the camellias looked as if each had been modelled in wax, or cut out with scissors. Over one in particular she bent for some time with enraptured admiration, observing how each snowy leaf was edged as if with a narrow fringe of scarlet, and the whole effect of this plant seemed too beautiful even for nature herself without some special effort to produce.

"You have seen uglier flowers than that," said a voice close to Beatrice, which made her start and look up in astonishment, while the colour flooded her whole face with crimson as she caught the observant eye of a singular-looking old man who stood opposite to her. He appeared like a living caricature more than like an ordinary man made for the every-day purposes of life, as his whole countenance and manner were so laughably grotesque; yet there was something marked and peculiar in his aspect and manner which prevented Beatrice from retaining her first impression that this might be Mr. Macgregor. The stranger wore a complete suit of worsted tartan,—even his wide-awake Glengarry cap was of the same unobtrusive material: his coarse thick boots had nails in them, and he carried in his hands a stick which seemed recently cut from the hedge;—yet, with this plainest of all exteriors, Beatrice thought her abrupt companion evidently a gentleman. He became in her estimation a very polite gentleman too, when he, with a look of surly good humour, took out his knife and cut her off several of the most brilliant roses and camellias, saying, with a serio-comic air

of gallantry as he presented them—"I mistook you in this garden for a butterfly enjoying the first day of its wings. Here is a rose so fresh and wild, I shall call it 'the Beatrice Farinelli.'"

"You will make me grow partial to my own name if I have such beautiful namesakes," replied she in a tone of good-humoured frankness, but with a very deep blush of surprise. Her smile might have supplied the place of sunshine to the flowers, when she added, "Lady Edith Tremorne sent me here with this plant for Mr. Macgregor. Can you tell me where to find him?"

"How do you know that I am not that great man the gardener myself? It would not be the first time you had made a mistake of that kind," said the eccentric old man shortly; then holding out his hand for the treasured little flower-pot, he watched the face of his young companion with singular earnestness. His features expressed neither admiration nor surprise, but the most intense scrutiny, and Beatrice, confused by the very obvious examination she was undergoing, tried to seem unconscious of it by talking on with all the girlish enthusiasm she felt about the splendid flowers around, which were beyond anything she had ever even imagined; but still a mutinous blush dyed her face with scarlet.

"Beautiful!" she exclaimed, her eyes fixed on the very bottom of a prodigious lily, while the eyes of the stranger applied the epithet to herself; "these flowers remind one of Aladdin's garden, where the flowers were formed of gems."

"When were you last there?" asked the old gentleman drily. "Aladdin's flowers had one advantage over ours, that they had no thorns and lasted for ever. Where is there anything produced in this world of which as much can be said? I have long wished to see you, Miss Farinelli, and yet now I wish, with all my heart, we had never met."

"Why?" asked Beatrice, with very natural surprise; "what earthly object could any one have in either meeting or avoiding me?"

"Perhaps no earthly object. Perhaps one of a far higher nature than this wretched old world could offer. I am weary of the whole farce; and yet there is something for me to do before I make my bow to the hisses or applauses of a world I hate. My last tie to life is what concerns you!"

"Concerns me!" exclaimed Beatrice, colouring and looking earnestly at her strange companion with an almost convulsive start of astonishment and of unbounded anxiety: "What can you mean? There are so many things I wish to hear. Tell me, oh! tell me, if you know anything that might bring me to the knowledge of my relations—my parents!"

"Not so fast," replied the stranger, rapidly cutting the brightest flowers till he had formed a prodigious bouquet; "these flowers have all names of their own, but you have none. You call yourself Miss Farinelli, which is an absurd mistake. Your name is no more 'Farinelli' than mine is. If you deny that, I can prove it."

"Then I shall deny it, that I may hear your proofs," answered Beatrice, trying to smile and to recover her composure. She now glanced with deep interest at the countenance of her companion, whose voice and look betrayed a degree of agitation which he was evidently ashamed of, and anxious to conceal. At length, in a tone of emotion not to be controlled, he said, with an abruptness which perfectly startled Beatrice, "Are you happy with Lady Edith? Tell me honestly now, are you happy in that fallow, dull, Presbyterian-looking hum-drummery of hers, or should you like an entire change for the better? Every dog, the adage says, has its day—has it—has had it—or will have it. This may perhaps be yours!"

He looked keenly at Beatrice, but apparently felt so confident of his right to question her, that the young girl seemed as much bound to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as if she had been on oath before a magistrate; therefore, though frightened to death by his abrupt and almost haughty manner, she resolutely replied: "I should be most ungrateful to the kindest of friends, to the most generous benefactress in the world, and to a good Providence who overloads me with benefits, if I were not as happy and satisfied as I can ever be without finding out who I am and where I come from. Can you, will you, tell me all you know?"

"Am I to believe, then," said the stranger, extending a sprig of myrtle to Beatrice on the end of his garden-scissors, "that you are contented to remain dependent upon one who can ill afford such a charge,—whose whole income might be put into a homœopathic pill?"

"My dependence on Lady Edith has never been more painful to me than that of an only child on her mother," replied Beatrice earnestly, while a bright tear of grateful affection glittered in her eye. Her voice became low and tremulous, when she added, "While I continue to live, breathe, or feel, I must gratefully love that best of friends. But for her I should have lived a homeless beggar. Think, then, what I owe to Lady Edith."

"She of course taught you all that sentimental nonsense!" said the stranger, affecting a careless tone, but darting a sharp piercing glance at Beatrice from under his dark commanding eye-brows; "Lady Edith, whatever she has omitted to teach you, has at least taught you gratitude on the very largest scale."

"You mistake Lady Edith entirely!" exclaimed Beatrice in a tone of mingled astonishment and regret. "She is much too high-minded and generous to speak of my obligations; but when Bishop Herbert confirmed me, he related what Mr. Clinton had often told me before, the story of my not very long life. They alone explained how much I owe to the best and truest friend that any helpless orphan ever found."

"Who says you are an orphan? Who can say that you have not a mother shedding tears of solitary grief because her child is a heretic?" exclaimed the stranger in a tone of stern excitement, but

intently watching the effect of his words on Beatrice, who stood lividly pale, her lips apart, her nostrils dilated, her eyes flashing with eagerness. "What would you give to hear more?"

"I would give up anything but principle; anything but my duty to God and to Lady Edith," answered Beatrice in accents of deep emotion; for she felt that much more than life was at stake now, and the conversation with this hard-souled stranger reminded her of much that had formerly passed with Mrs. Lorraine. "Tell me all you know; or at least tell me something."

"Not while you are a Protestant! Not while you remain under the roof of Lady Edith Tremorne," replied her companion, opening the garden-gate, which they now reached, for Beatrice to retire, and putting into her trembling hands the magnificent bouquet he had cut, which could scarcely have been equalled in Covent Garden Market. He then added, in a tone of mingled kindness and authority, "Let me see you here again; at three to-morrow, I shall be in this garden punctually; but bring no one with you, and tell no one with whom you are about to meet."

"I cannot tell any one who you are, as I do not know," replied Beatrice anxiously, and yet trying to smile. "Have you any particular name?"

"One that I have, perhaps, no better right to bear than you have to yours," muttered the stranger, with a degree of stern and sudden agitation that made Beatrice ask herself, in some alarm, if he were perfectly sane; but the incognito looked like a gentleman in his senses too; therefore, though greatly intimidated by the stranger's beetling eye-brows and gruff abrupt manner, she added in a rather frightened voice, "Now pray tell me who it really is that I have had the pleasure of meeting; I am dying to know?"

"Then you must die," replied the old gentleman resolutely; "I have not made up my mind yet, after meeting you so unexpectedly, what to say, and what to leave unsaid. Little do you guess how much depends on the decision! That secret has been the torture of my existence for years."

"Then, why not tell it now?" asked Beatrice, anxiously. "Think what I must suffer till you do."

"No!—a thousand times no!—I shall have a muzzle on, while you remain an obstinate little heretic. Do you think such secrets as these are to jump out at once, like a jack-in-the-box to amuse children? No! This is no child's play," said the stranger, becoming very serious. "No! It cannot be told yet; not, perhaps, while I survive. I must consult Father Eustace, and you must listen to what he will say as if he spoke in the name of all your unknown relations. Come back to-morrow at the same hour, or I shall put the cat into the bag again."

"May I bring Lady Edith?" inquired Beatrice, "And are you quite sure Lord Eaglescain will not be returned?"

"I am sure of nothing, except that you must come without Lady

Edith. Let me see none of that school-girl mannerism, but do as I bid you! What objection have you to meet Lord Eaglescarn if he does arrive?"

"We never intrude here when the family is at home," replied Beatrice, with an amused and puzzled smile. "But I could have no more rational objection to meet Lord Eaglescarn than you to meet Lady Edith. You do not even know her!"

"Do I not!" muttered the stranger between his teeth, before he strode hastily away. "Your paragon too-good-for-this-world friend was known to me once for all, ages before you were born. I hated her then and ever since. Well! who knows what may happen next! Take patience and shuffle the cards! There are worse people in the world after all than even Lady Edith."

Beatrice had never before heard the name of Lady Edith mentioned without the most reverential respect; therefore, she listened with indignant astonishment to the angry sarcastic tone in which this oddly-mannered stranger spoke of her beloved benefactress, and it was in great perplexity that she debated with herself whether ever voluntarily to meet him again.

A sharp struggle was going on in her mind, between curiosity to know whether he could or would tell her anything of her own origin, and very deep indignation at his tone in mentioning Lady Edith, when, on turning the corner of the lane, Beatrice met a personage exactly answering to the description she had heard of Mr. Macgregor. He paused as she was about to pass, and fixing his eyes with angry astonishment and very evident disapprobation on her splendid bouquet, said in a tone of surly amazement, "Who, in the wide world, has dared to cut my prize camellias? These flowers are all from my garden. Several of these were intended for the flower-show! Pray, Miss, how on earth came they here? Am I awake, or dreaming? Who gave them to you, Miss Farnelli?"

"I wish you could tell me, for the gentleman would not give his name," replied Beatrice, immediately describing her recent companion in the garden; and while she proceeded, Mr. Macgregor's whole countenance changed to an expression of the most profound respect, as he said in an accent of surprise, "That must have been my lord himself! I thought, all along, his lordship would come home in time to observe his own Saint's-day to-morrow. If you wish to see flowers in perfection, Miss, come and see our Chapel decorated for Sunday. I have been placing there what would gain the first prize in any flower-show throughout the world. Your eyes will probably never see such a sight again. It is worth an old man's while to be gardener at Eaglescarn, where my flowers are put to so good a purpose. None of your ball-room bouquets here!"

Beatrice felt perfectly blameless on the score of ball-room bouquets, but smilingly passed on, carrying her own splendid

present; and, when she reached home, related to Lady Edith, with girlish frankness and animation, the greater part of what had passed during her particularly adventurous walk.

"Your account of Lord Eaglescain's conversation only confirms what I heard yesterday," said Lady Edith, thoughtfully, "that he, and his whole family, have become frantically eager of late about making converts. The manœuvres employed at present are very strange; but as for any attempt of the kind on you, my dear girl, I trust the fortress is impreguably garrisoned by a long course of Bible-reading and prayer,—as well as by the consciousness that you are an immortal being, with immortal interests, not to be hazarded on the word of man, but on the written word of God."

"Yes! thanks to my best of friends, Lady Edith," replied Beatrice, in a tone of solemn emotion. "I used to think there was a wide gulf between us and all idolators, but now even among my own few friends, how many, of late, have been ensnared into the ranks of idol worshippers. It is a mystery that I could wonder at for ever, when an educated Protestant returns to the very infancy of Pagan religion, by adoring images, and even instruments of torture. Who would think of reverencing the knife with which his leg had been amputated? Yet the stone that killed Stephen, or a part of St. Peter's cross, are objects of actual worship to the Papists."

"When I went to the cathedral at Antwerp," said Lady Edith, "I saw some strange specimens of Popish puerility and foppery. On a stone pillar was hung a diamond necklace, the gift of some devotee, and high above that was suspended a bass violin by Stradivarius, worth £200. Advancing onwards, I reached an image of the Virgin Mary,—a large wax doll, dressed in a tawdry old court dress, the petticoat, of faded blue satin, being covered with a spangled skirt, such as you would see in front of any booth at a fair. A crown of gilt paper, and a wreath of faded artificial flowers, completed this lifeless idol. How truly is Romanism said to be masked heathenism; and it might really be disputed whether Mahomet, Joe Smith, or the Pope, is the greatest impostor."

Beatrice felt an intense interest when, at the suggestion of Lady Edith, she, the following day, accepted the gardener's invitation, and, for the first time, saw a Popish chapel. The dim religious light, struggling through many a stained-glass window,—the incessant tinkling of little bells,—the dressing and undressing of the priests,—the shrine in a side aisle, containing, in a richly-sculptured sarcophagus, a splendidly dressed wax image of St. Veronica,—the holy water, with which the people imitated baptism by sprinkling themselves,—the tall candles, wasting their unavailing light while eclipsed by sunshine,—the dark box for secret confession,—and the smoking incense, which seemed to Beatrice as if it had some intoxicating, mystical effect upon those who breathed it, all bore a marvellous resemblance to what she had recently read of the Buddhist!

superstitions. A palm-branch, plaited by the nuns, blessed by the Pope, and brought home by Lord Eaglescain from the Sistine chapel, was borne round several times for reverential contemplation, though it seemed to Beatrice merely made of old shavings.

Father Eustace, in his sermon, which began and ended with an invocation to the Virgin Mary, as Queen of Heaven, related, on the authority of a living cardinal, how one of the saints canonized in 1839, when he knelt down in an attitude of prayer to the Virgin, was seen by all present to be elevated more than a foot from the ground; how St. John Joseph, canonized at the same time, "had a halo of light encircling his head during prayer," "and how his frequent ravishment from the earth and suspension in the air was a well-known occurrence; and also that many saw St. Pacificus raised several inches above the surface of the altar steps." Beatrice thought this a most useless and uncomfortable mark of pre-eminence, and believed his faculties were probably suspended rather than his body; for it was clearly a case of *tête monté*. Lady Edith, shocked at all the dangerous fallacies and blasphemies she heard, glanced around, and saw Mrs. Lorraine listening, her whole countenance wrapt in almost delirious excitement; and beside her, to the surprise and consternation of Beatrice, sat Bessie McDonald, her bright eyes brighter than ever, and her whole face in a glow of the most intense admiration.

Scarcely had Beatrice left the chapel before she was overtaken by the young sportsman who had, on a previous day, accompanied her from church; and, while Lady Edith was detained behind by an old woman, relating an endless history of her rheumatism, the stranger, advancing with fascinating grace, joined Beatrice, who gave a half-glance round of astonishment, and the colour stole into her cheek when she unexpectedly found that he intended to escort her along the road, saying, in a tone of easy *nonchalance*, "Here I am, returned on your hands like a very bad shilling! As I attended your church last week, now you have returned the visit to mine."

Beatrice raised her eye furtively for a moment, but dropped it again instantly without speaking, and walked rapidly on.

"Did you ever hear of two lovers who held opposite persuasions, and would not marry till they were of one mind?" asked her companion, amused at the notes of astonishment he saw multiplying in the expressive face of Beatrice. "They both argued so well, that they both became converted, and so remained as much apart in doctrine as ever. Suppose we try the same experiment. But I see you are going to speak! I yield to your irresistible arguments without having heard them. I admire all you are going to say, and quite agree with you already."

Beatrice looked up for half a second, her face perfectly scarlet with astonishment at the oddity of her companion's manner; but the stranger looked quite unconscious that he had said anything at

all unusual, and rattled heedlessly on, saying, "Pray, Miss Farinelli, why did you throw your bouquet at my head just now?"

"I did?" exclaimed Beatrice, in utter amazement. "I have no bouquet to throw!"

"Well! do not seem so scandalized! I merely wanted to see you look astonished, and to find a pretext to offer you this. How generous I am! The camellias are perfect, and the perfume of this gardenia delicious. Now, thank me instantly; for I never allow myself to be treated with ingratitude."

"You are quite right, but rather peremptory," replied Beatrice, smiling, "I have very seldom had such flowers, and very seldom felt more obliged."

"Now, you are evidently wishing me a hundred miles off! I ought not to have ventured on approaching you; but the temptation was irresistible when I saw you, like a wandering Peri, strolling on the high-road alone, with no companion but that small parasol. I positively shall not be driven away from you, even by the most forbidding words or looks. Say, then, that I may remain,—that I may see you safely home,—that you consider Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, as I announced myself, at least an endurable nuisance."

"I seem not likely to be allowed any choice," replied Beatrice, unable to help laughing, "you are the most arbitrary acquaintance I ever had,—except, perhaps, Lord Eaglescairn, whom I met for the first time yesterday! How very odd he is!"

"Everybody is odd! My own private opinion is, that no one can be considered quite sane. I am not; you are not; none of our relations are. Lord Eaglescairn is my very eccentric and very near relative, and, moreover, very vehement in his loves and in his hatreds; time and the gout have rusted his temper, so you are lucky to be on the right side of his good graces now."

"Are you sure that I am?" said Beatrice, jestingly assuming a tone of dignified uncertainty. "His manner to me was very abrupt and very strange. I am told his son, Lord Iona, is, if possible, still more eccentric!"

"Only too true! Now let us suppose that Lord Eaglescairn hates you if he seemed to do so, and that I take the opposite part, in rather liking you than otherwise. The fact is, I always like or hate in extremes; but you must not mistake me for a mere scatter-brained rattle, or look puzzled at me, as if I were a conundrum that you are going to give up. I mean soon to be quite reformed into dulness."

"I hope not," said Beatrice laughing; "I like people with some vein of oddity in them."

"You will think I am now making you my father confessor; but the fact is, that since I have seen you, and known Lady Edith, I find out that there has long been a sort of good-for-nothingness about my life that wearies me. I have seen the world on both sides now, and am tired of it."

The stranger paused, for a few moments, and then resumed, as

if soliloquising:—"Look at this beautiful landscape, that noble residence, those smiling farms, and that thriving little village!—all to be forsaken,—all rejected by him on whom God in his bounty bestowed them, for a lazy cell, a scourge, and a cowl."

"I trust not; as Sir Allan is announced to be a candidate for parliament," replied Beatrice anxiously. "He is like a brother to me; and as a son to Lady Edith, therefore we hope yet to have him restored to his natural ties, to his old friendships, and to his actual duties, by this political movement."

"It is all a mere *ruse* to blind the tenantry, and to mislead himself," muttered the stranger in an undertone. "No! his doom is sealed; his intellects will be as much as possible degraded by fairy tales and visions, which is the popish plan with newly-caught victims who are not fit for their deeper schemes, and he will be ensnared into becoming a voluntary victim, shut up in La Trappe;—a trap in every sense!"

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Beatrice, growing pale with apprehension. "Can nothing be done to rescue him?"

"Nothing, when you consider the safe custody that McAlpine is in with his fathomless uncle, Father Ambrose. If any scheme could be devised, you are sure of my aid. You may draw a bill at sight upon my exertions, to any amount; and whenever you wish to illustrate the theory of attraction only summon me to your presence. One only hope remains. Sir Allan had an attachment in life, I know, which equalled in depth and fervour, he once assured me, the most fabulous imaginations of any poet. And can I wonder at that feeling now? Were he to meet, again, that one individual so deserving of his affection, and to realize all the hopes he confided to me in his happier days, could there be a doubt that Sir Allan would be restored to himself? Miss Farinelli, you must rescue him, for you only could succeed!"

"Impossible! you quite misunderstand the brother-and-sister terms we are on: no more, I assure you," replied Beatrice, becoming pale as death. "Think of me, as I trust Allan has learned to do, and as I do myself, only as a nameless foundling."

"But in all else inexpressibly the superior of others. I know that the name of McAlpine is as old as any in Domesday Book, but what then? If you were a peeress in your own right, as I dare say you are, that could not make Sir Allan more devoted than he was. With the allurements of such a home as he once promised himself, my poor deluded friend might be recalled. He may yet become the envy of mankind,—mine more than all! But it matters not! That shall not interfere——"

The stranger paused, hesitated, and abruptly bowing to Beatrice, hurried away; but Lady Edith met him afterwards on the road, talking to this man, nodding to that, and laughing or chatting with all, the very picture of good-humoured hilarity and of general urbanity, as pleasant and sociable as if he had been a candidate in a contested election.

CHAPTER XX.

"Is there in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !
That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Bessy's unsuspecting youth ?
Shame on his perjured arts ! dissembling smooth !
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled ?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth ?"—BURNS.

LADY EDITH sat one morning early, reading, as was her usual custom at that hour, the Bible and some other works of intellectual devotion. Bright scarlet roses were rushing in at every window of her drawing-room, perfuming the gentle summer gale which refreshed without disturbing her, while the song of many birds in joyous concert resounded gladly among the surrounding trees.

Lady Edith, who delighted to observe how much good prevails over evil, even in this world, looked cheerfully up, to admire and enjoy so many beautiful gifts of Providence, when she became startled to perceive McRonald, who had entered the room unobserved, standing before her as pale as a sheet, his lips quivering, and vainly attempting to speak.

"McRonald !" exclaimed Lady Edith, half rising from her seat, in sudden consternation, while Beatrice hastily left her drawing and came forward with anxious alarm. "Tell me the worst at once, McRonald ! What has happened ?"

"If you please, my lady," said he, in accents that seemed to tremble with anger and grief, "that foolish, well-meaning idiot Bessie is below, and poor Robert Carre. This is a very different visit from their last." The old man, after a solemn and most sorrowful pause, during which a large tear rolled slowly down his time-worn countenance, mournfully added in a tone of smothered despair, "Two more heart-broken young people I never saw. It is all Mrs. Lorraine's doing ; but if any comfort can be found, they have come to the right place now when they come to your ladyship. Father Eustace has it all his own way now, but I wish the world and Clanmarina were filled with better people."

Lady Edith gazed at McRonald's agitated countenance with grave alarm, which became increased rather than diminished when at her desire he ushered in her two young favourites.

Robert and Bessie entered not now, as before, arm in arm, both smiling with shy but conscious felicity. To day, on the contrary, young Carre, his cheek pale, his lip compressed, and his eyes flashing with indignation and sorrow, strode first into the room. With a bow of the deepest but most mournful respect to Lady Edith, he then firmly grasped the back of a chair and glanced almost fiercely round at Bessie, who followed faltering in her step, and as if crouch-

ing into nothing with misery. She looked beautiful beyond expression, but it seemed only the beauty of death; for the joyous light that used to dance in her splendid eyes was quenched, the colour that once bloomed in her brilliant cheek was fled, and the whole of her figure, expression, and attitude, seemed like that of one doomed to martyrdom. Joan of Arc herself could not have looked more rapt in dismal enthusiasm at the hour of death than Bessie McDonald did now, while she stood with an expression of rigid fixedness in mind as well as in body before Lady Edith.

"Robert Carre!" exclaimed Lady Edith, in a low tone of sorrowful amazement and very anxious suspense; "how is this? What has happened between you? Tell me all!"

"None can explain anything but herself," replied Robert, turning slowly round with a look of stern manly grief, but avoiding even a momentary glance at Bessie, who had covered her face with her hands, and shook as in the coldest blast of winter. "None know the truth except her, and it is to find out the whole truth that I have brought my —. No! not my Bessie,—no longer mine! But I wish at least to have all explained. Tell me, Bessie! what has turned your mind upside down? only tell me the real reason why we are parted—tell me why my faithful affection—my devoted love for many long years, is to be crushed; why every hope of home and happiness—oh, Bessie! Is it you that could say this! you that could think of such a thing! All, all is ended for ever!"

There was a pause of several minutes, during which a deep convulsive sob from Bessie was the only sound to be heard, while her pale lips became compressed and her small hands were firmly clenched together.

"Here, Madam," continued Robert, in a low tone of forced composure; "here is the letter I received from Bessie some hours ago. It has filled me with a most withering amazement, and I never rested till I had tracked her steps to this house,—to her uncle's room."

Lady Edith deliberately examined the letter, sealed, she could not but observe, with a Latin motto and a crest borne by the Ambrose family—the globe surmounted by a tiara, with which Father Eustace had formerly sealed his notes to Sir Evan. Twice Lady Edith read over this letter, and each time she felt an increasingly sorrowful perplexity what to think and what to do. She then looked round with mournful regret at the scene of devastating misery before her, and sighed heavily over the sudden change. Following, as usual, the strong impulse of her own kind heart and clear understanding, Lady Edith then drew her chair close beside Bessie, and taking her by the hand, said in accents of heartfelt kindness, but at the same time of most earnest remonstrance, "Surely, Bessie, it must require some stronger reason than I can imagine, to make you give up the happy prospect of becoming Robert Carre's much-loved wife! What can have changed you so

sadly since that joyous day when I hoped that you had, with the blessing of God, attained the certainty of a well-ordered home in which to pass many well-spent years together? Why do you now break the heart of your faithful and attached Robert? Do you prefer another?"

"No! no! impossible! I never mean to marry—never—never!" exclaimed Bessie, her voice rising to a tone of high enthusiasm, and a deep stain of scarlet mounting to her hitherto pallid cheek, "Robert will one day find another wife. For me there shall never be any husband on earth! never!"

"Bessie," said Lady Edith, looking with earnest sadness at the agitated girl, "it is early in life to know your own mind so unalterably. In a few years you may probably change this resolution, and then —."

"Never!" replied Bessie, with mournful firmness, "I shall soon be placed beyond the reach of change, and I ought not to regret the sacrifice as I do."

"You are not dying, Bessie, and nothing short of death can place a young creature like you so certainly beyond the reach of a thousand vicissitudes in the hopes and fears, the wishes and intentions of life."

"I am bound for the present by a solemn oath to reveal nothing," replied Bessie, in a tone far different from its naturally melodious cheerfulness, "time will tell all! Robert need only look in my miserable, altered face, to see what it cost me to give him up. Friends, who must for the present be nameless, have told me what I owe to duty; but it is well that the blue sky overhead, and the sun shining brightly above, remind me now, in this hour of temptation and trial, that there is a world for which all on earth must be sacrificed—must be crushed like a worm beneath my feet."

Bessie's voice had sunk away to the lowest whisper, while Robert listened as if life or death depended on every syllable she uttered. He now advanced towards Lady Edith, the expression of his features almost fierce with agitation, and said in a tone stern with anxiety, "Ask Bessie, Madam, who that man is with whom she has lately been observed walking near Eaglescairn, almost before daylight in the morning, and after dusk in the evening. From whom has Bessie received of late the rarest flowers, grown in an expensive conservatory, such as poor people, in our rank, cannot afford even to look at?—Ask her, madam, also where she got these."

Robert hurled upon the table, while his pale compressed lip quivered with angry contempt, a rosary of amber beads, a relic of decayed bone in a small glass case which broke as it fell, an image of St. Bridget in stucco, an old tooth fit only for a charnel-house, some ancient iron instrument of torture, a lock of odd-looking red hair, said to be St. Bridget's, and a missal richly decorated with brass corners and clasps. He turned then to Bessie, and said in

accents dignified by the intensity of feeling with which he spoke, "Your mother sent me these. Is it for trash like this, Bessie, that you give up the honest affection of a heart that would die for you? Tell me what villain has betrayed you into such worse than folly. If I could be certain—if I could only discover that Lord Eaglescain himself is the enemy who has misled your mind, he should feel what man is to man, where the feelings are by nature alike. Bessie, end my suspense! Do you prefer another? Nothing short of that assurance can make me abandon all hope. Whom do you prefer?"

Bessie rose from her seat. With a trembling tearful glance she held out her hand towards Robert, and falteringly advanced a few steps towards him. He rushed forward to meet her, and she fell fainting into his extended arms, while he showered upon her a thousand epithets of the tenderest attachment. When Lady Edith observed the depth and ardour of affection with which young Carre watched the gradual restoration of Bessie's consciousness, and the honest rapture with which he welcomed her restoration, she thought how beautiful are the best affections of human life, how merciful is the Creator who grants His blessing upon them, and how cruel that religion which would extinguish the most pleasing earthly gift of God to man.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Such thoughts as love the gloom of night,
I close examine by the light;
For who, though bribed by gain to lie,
Dare sunbeam-written truths deny?"—GREENE.

THE next news that Lady Edith and Beatrice heard of Bessie filled them with indignant and almost incredulous astonishment. She had disappointed her young lover, and gone to serve Lady Eaglescain at the Castle, there to be taught under an Abigail to act as the future assistant in the toilet and boudoir, at a very considerable salary. Robert, who felt that the greatest of all griefs is to cashier from our affections one who had hitherto appeared deserving of their utmost depth, with feelings of outraged affection angrily and sadly contemplated Bessie's farewell letter to him as if he almost hoped the words might vanish altogether. From that day he sorrowfully shut himself up in a nut-shell at home, refusing to see any one, while paying constant unremitting but most sorrowful attention to his dying father.

On young Carre's return home from the last interview at Lady Edith's with Bessie he saw a man leave his father's house, and

after obviously making a circuit to avoid meeting him he disappeared like a phantom among the offices. Robert hurried forward to overtake the fugitive, but failed; and though he asked the maid usually in attendance, who had left the house at his approach, she maintained that no mortal had been at Daisybank during his absence. There was nevertheless a hurry and confusion in the servant's manner of speaking, and a look of craven fear that perplexed young Carre, who then approached the bedside of his dying father. The old farmer, when Robert appeared, struggled up from his pillow and sat erect, an effort which he had been unable before to make. He then pointed towards the maid, who was trying desperately to look quite unconscious, and muttered,—“She let him in. Was it a dream? What did I sign? Ask her—ask her. Are we beggars?”

With a vacant look, the old farmer fell shuddering on his pillow, but still pointed to the maid, who looked greatly confused, in a perfect agony of terror, and hurried out of the room, saying that her master was delirious, and that he frightened her by his insane raving. “But,” she added, “not a Christian man, woman, or child has been within this door, sir, that you did not see!” She then murmured to herself, “I have not said, no Popish priest, for Father Eustace can scarcely be called a Christian, and besides, Mr. Robert saw him leaving the house, therefore as the priest said when he paid me that money, ‘it is no lie to make people believe what is false, if it seem on the whole best to do so.’”

Bessie, when she entered Lady Eaglescairn's service to learn the secrets of Romanism, had been prepared by Mrs. Lorraine to find her mistress of a temper difficult to please, but she was not prepared for an impossibility. The first glimpse she got into the unreasonableness of Lady Eaglescairn's requirements was the day after her arrival, when Monsieur Martini, the cook, appeared after breakfast to receive his orders, and Lady Eaglescairn said to him in a languid but peremptory tone, “There has been a tiresome sameness in your luncheons lately, Martini, therefore pray think of something new to-day that one could fancy. I am wearied to death of game, ham, and butcher's meat,—fish, eggs, and pastry, I cannot endure another day,—soups, puddings, jellies, and creams are all detestable, and I wish to have no fruit, vegetables, puddings, or preserves, no brown or white sauces, but give me something original to show your invention—a dish that we have never seen before.”

The unfortunate Monsieur Martini shrugged his French shoulders as high as the most profound respect could allow, and looking most disconsolately perplexed, begged her ladyship to take the trouble of naming any *entrée* she could condescend to imagine.

“Well!” said Lady Eaglescairn, in a tone of concession, “I do recollect once tasting something most exquisite at Prince Schwartzburgh's, which you must try to imitate. I have not an idea what it could be made of, but the flavour seemed very peculiar.

It was neither sour nor sweet, and it certainly was not bitter. It had no spices, sugar, nor butter, but it was exquisite. Now Martini, I have said enough and am wearied of the subject, but go off and try if you can send me up something similar."

Monsieur Martini retired in silent despair, and Bessie felt herself in a place where impossibilities were expected, however impossible.

The only mark of gratitude that Lady Eaglescairn ever showed to her diligent attendant, Bessie, consisted in a most determined and authoritative effort to complete her conversion to Romanism. The day after Bessie's arrival, Lady Eaglescairn announced that she was to read aloud to her for some hours every day, and to attend her in the mornings to chapel.

"I can go with your ladyship to the door," said Bessie, colouring deeply, "but my mind is not quite made up yet."

"Your mind!" exclaimed Lady Eaglescairn, in a tone of satirical contempt. "Nonsense! don't keep standing and stammering there, but get ready instantly."

"Please your ladyship, Mrs. Lorraine promised that I should not be hurried in my decision, and that I should not have to attend a Romish place of worship," answered Bessie, looking pale with consternation: "I cannot yet attend regularly at a Popish chapel."

Lady Eaglescairn looked aghast with indignation at this appearance of rebellion, and said imperatively: "Pshaw! nonsense! How can an ignorant girl like you understand such subjects? Father Eustace will explain them all: but many Protestants have no scruple in going to hear the music in our chapels. Even Protestant clergymen do so frequently abroad. If Mr. Clinton himself were at Rome he would do as Rome does."

"Oh, no! my lady, I am perfectly sure and certain Mr. Clinton would not."

"Mr. Clinton came yesterday with Mrs. Lorraine to hear the private rehearsal of the anthem. In his own parish he must not come publicly; but he was quite charmed, so you have his example to sanction your coming, and you must."

Beatrice retained but one distinct trace of her early adventure on the ocean, which consisted in an extreme terror of bathing, boating, or any aquatic amusement connected with that most whimsical of elements the sea, which she quite coincided with Bishop Hall in considering as made for wonder and use, not for pleasure. Lady Edith used to observe that Beatrice had never even shown any childish pleasure in watching a paper boat, and the young girl herself smilingly added, that she could scarcely look at a watered silk dress without feeling squeamish; but she nevertheless delighted to walk, basket in hand, along the shore, an active curiosity-monger, collecting rare sea-weeds, beautiful shells and curious spars, as well as in watching the fishermen bringing in their unfortunate captives.

Free and joyous as the sea-gulls careering over her head, Beatrice set out one afternoon to visit Bessie's invalid mother, followed by a gardener's boy, to carry some fruit, wine, and vegetables to the cottage. As she stepped lightly along, almost within water-mark, admiring the bright brisk waves and all the glories of the boundless ocean, that solitary scene seemed to her like the world in its primæval state, when nothing had been created but the sea and the dry land. To Beatrice all nature was Christian, for she could trace out religion in the fields, in the garden, or in the firmament, in the dashing spray, or in the mountain breezes; and she was humming in an undertone to herself the words and air of Luther's Hymn, when, turning the sharp corner of a cliff, she observed far below the figure of Father Eustace landing from a small species of fishing boat common to that bay, and walking rapidly away he soon disappeared.

The sun, like a globe of living fire, touched the horizon and lighted up the wide ocean into a sheet of burnished gold, and the glory of evening was on mountain, forest, and river. With a buoyant sense of sea-bird freedom, amidst all the joyous sights and sounds of nature, but still far distant from the lonely hut to which she was bending her steps, Beatrice suddenly almost fancied that she heard a far-off shout, a distant cry for help. On looking round, however, not a human being was visible, nor a symptom of human life except a little old half-ruinous fisherman's boat, which lay moored in the nearest creek for the use of McDonald, who sometimes on very calm days persuaded her to go out in it with him to fish in Whiting Bay. Beatrice paused and listened intensely; when there arose apparently from the water a cry, shrill as ever gave expression to human distress, while her attention became instantly directed towards a sand-bank, which at low water she had sometimes paddled out to in the little boat with Old McDonald, but which had a habit in spring-tides of being covered many feet deep beneath the waves. It was a favourite perch for the whole tribe of sea-birds, and Beatrice had often been shown one pointed eminence on which a regular sentinel bird was perched night and day, on the look-out for his more active companions, who relieved him in their turn. Sportsmen often assembled on that precipitous point from Eaglescairn, to shoot the gulls, hundreds of which were now clustering in noisy glee upon the rolling tide, shrieking with discordant delight in the air, and hovering merrily around the sea-girt rocks.

Again there was no sound except the sullen monotonous splash of the waves; but upon the narrow summit of the rock Beatrice became almost certain that some human being was making signals of distress to her, and it seemed evident that his life, on such a precarious perch, must be as insecure as that of Sinbad on the back of a whale. With a look of startled apprehension she hurriedly called up the boy, who was following at some distance with her heavy basket, and asked him whether he did not perceive some moving

object there. He gazed till they could no longer doubt the fact that there was a person signalling to them from that sea-girt stone which would evidently be in a few minutes washed over by the advancing waves. The next moment there arose the sound of a human voice in hoarse shrieking accents, calling with terrible earnestness for help. That cry thrilled through the very souls of those who heard it, while they looked across the boiling surge, and for an instant Beatrice stood helplessly panic-struck. The danger was immediate, and no aid but her own within a mile or two. She hesitated—a film for one moment darkened over her eyes, but she hastily collected her agitated thoughts, and seeing McDonald's almost ruinous old boat, leaky and dangerous as it appeared, she instantly sprung, lightly as any bird, into the precarious conveyance destined to carry her over a most uneven track, and calling to the boy who hurried after her, they pushed from the shore.

Unskilled as Beatrice and the gardener's boy were in the use of an oar, she had sometimes at the instigation of Lady Edith, who wished to overcome her extreme aversion to the sea, jestingly entered a boat with McDonald, and imitated the fishermen's wives and daughters in Clanmarina, who very frequently steered a small boat, such as her own, across the bay. Slowly, because with great difficulty, Beatrice advanced in the frail and leaky vessel, which rose on the crest of every wave, the white foam curling high around the bows; and as she at last neared the rock, white with the breaking surf, a covey of affrighted birds whirled up in noisy terror to the clouds. Beatrice looked at the world of waters around, which were encroaching and encroaching, advancing and advancing around the solitary tenant of the almost invisible spot, on which, to her utter amazement, stood the young stranger whom she had so often before encountered unexpectedly, but never so unexpectedly as now, when she perceived him with pale cheek, compressed lips, but firm expression of countenance and attitude, awaiting her slow and very uncertain progress. The small boat seemed leaking fast, and became heavier every moment, while at each stroke of the oars Beatrice and her boy companion felt their strength more exhausted; but the head of the little vessel was at last within the stranger's grasp, and leaping lightly on board, he silently took the oar from Beatrice, reached her his hat with which to bale out the water, and assisted by the gardener's boy, pulled so vigorously to the shore, that in much less than half the time they had taken to come, the endangered trio were safely stranded again in that creek from which the inexperienced navigators had so hastily started. All danger being over, Beatrice, like a true woman, began for the first time to feel the whole terror of that strange enterprise, which she had so generously encountered and so wonderfully achieved. Her face became pale as death, her lip quivered, she trembled and nearly sank on the ground, while her animated companion poured out a whole volley of warm-hearted thanks for her courageous preserva-

tion of his life. He spoke at first with a solemn earnestness very unlike indeed to his usual manner, but seeing that this too deeply affected her feelings, he with evident effort resumed his former rallying tone.

"Truly Grace Darling was nothing to you! Very few ladies in this wide world would have ventured to wet an oar in my service to-day! You shall have the gold medal of the Humane Society, —this is quite a melo-dramatic adventure. I never expected to be so like a sea-gull in a storm. Father Eustace and I were pulling against each other, and he did not rightly describe the sunk rocks on which my frail bark was suddenly and completely shattered. He had fallen far behind, when the accident occurred. My little cockle-shell sunk in a moment, and no shouting or signals of mine could catch his attention, therefore it is the more extraordinary and fortunate that they caught yours. I am like an Arctic voyager delivered from an iceberg."

Beatrice, whose pale face had been till now covered by her trembling hands, looked up when the priest was named, and at once described to her companion, in low trembling accents, the conduct of Father Eustace on landing from his own boat, in hurrying away without once looking round, a narrative to which the stranger listened with grave and intense interest. He then said in a musing tone :

"Father Eustace must have lost his senses, if he ever had any! What can it all mean? The next heir of entail after myself is a keen, almost frantic Roman Catholic. The zealous priest might not, perhaps, be over-zealous to save so unruly a son of the Church as Mr. Cornelius O'Brien has lately been, but we are the best friends. He could scarcely intend to load his conscience, if he has one, with the crime of murder, and to make me food for those very fishes which we were so lately trying together to catch. Well! I do not wish any harm to Father Eustace, but I would give him 10,000*l.* a year to live away from Eaglescairn Castle. His influence at Eaglescairn is a mystery beyond all fathoming, and if he or I are to be sent away, it will certainly not be him. I suppose he is now at the Castle expecting me home on a stretcher! How fortunate for me that you had a fit of courage in my hour of need;—though the loss of life would not have been to my mind the loss of anything much to be valued either by myself or others. I long ago discovered, like the little girl in Punch, that this world is hollow and my doll stuffed with saw-dust. You who preserved me have known little of life yet to make you, as I am, weary of it."

Lady Edith, when Beatrice, her bright face sparkling with animation, gave an account of the day's adventure, felt secretly even more gratified than she chose to express, that her beloved young *protégée*, such a mere girl in appearance, though a woman in sense and feeling, had shown the most timely courage and judgment in so startling an emergency. Next morning she and Beatrice were

busily employed in arranging their enormous basket with a supply of tracts, Bibles, and medicines for distribution, and putting the last touches to some little gingham frocks, when a pony carriage whirled up to the door, from which a self-important looking lady alighted, rustling in silks, and fluttering in lace and feathers.

A moment afterwards the boy in buttons breathlessly announced—"The Countess of Eaglescain." The visitor's air of magnificent condescension on entering, as if the room was not large enough to contain her, reminded Beatrice of her own favourite peacock spreading his plumage in the sun; and her superb acknowledgment of Lady Edith's polite reception was stiff and frigid as the North Pole itself. Seeing that Lady Eaglescain chose to continue as cold as Wenham-lake ice, Lady Edith became snow. Very different was the aspect of haughty ease afterwards, but at the same time of most marked cordiality, amounting even to kindness, with which the dignified visitor turned to Beatrice, saying she had called on her in consequence of the accident of yesterday. She then overwhelmed Beatrice at once by her consequential civilities, and with the most voluble thanks for her courageous conduct in delivering "dear Edward" from so frightful a danger. Who Edward was, she evidently fancied it impossible that any one should not know, and Beatrice thought it easier to remain ignorant than to appear so by asking any questions about the *soi-disant* Mr. Cornelius O'Brien; for she felt that the eyes of Lady Eaglescain were fastened upon her with a most elaborate stare of extreme curiosity.

"When can you come to spend a long time with us at Eaglescain, Miss Farinelli? Let it be soon, and for at least ten days," said Lady Eaglescain, in a tone of arbitrary good humour. "We are all anxious to improve an acquaintance only too late of beginning."

Beatrice colouring deeply, and with a clandestine glance at Lady Edith for support, replied that she felt very sensible of the honour, and also of the kindness intended, but she never left her own cottage home——never.

The countenance of Lady Eaglescain had in general little expression, except from a pair of singularly elevated eyebrows, giving her an aspect of unvarying surprise, which seemed, if possible, increased by hearing the answer of Beatrice; but she replied with a look of dignity and displeasure, as if all her companion had said were mere words, of course meaning nothing—

"On what day shall I come for you in my carriage? After luncheon, to-morrow, would suit perfectly: my new Abigail is a *protégée* of yours, and will most delightedly attend on your toilette."

Beatrice looked as she felt, distressingly perplexed, for there was a tone of polite superiority in Lady Eaglescain's manner which it was very difficult to resist from a personage so superior in age and rank to herself, who evidently considered it a matter of course that the proposed visit should commence the very day and hour she chose to name. Yet Lady Eaglescain's marked avoidance of all

attention to her own benefactress kept Beatrice firm, though it was in a tone of remorseful gratitude to Lady Eaglescairn that with a hot blush and tremulous voice she again more earnestly declined the invitation, and she felt astonished at her own audacity in doing so. Lady Eaglescairn listened to her timid, but firm apologies, with an air of most majestic astonishment. Very proud, indeed, she looked, when with an aspect of self-importance that might have done honour to Britannia herself, and of greatly offended dignity, she at length retreated to her carriage.

Beatrice then, drawing a long breath of intense relief, turned to Lady Edith with her own charming smile,—very charming it was—saying, “Now the world is at liberty to go round again! I ought, perhaps, to be grateful for this honour, and I am; but that dreadfully condescending Lady Eaglescairn, looking all dignity and daggers at my own dear aunt Edith, terrifies me. Royalty itself can be nothing in comparison of her! She must be sister to the sun, moon, and stars! I would rather have gone into solitary confinement for a week to please any body, than venture into such overpowering society without you, dear Lady Edith—you, who are more than a mother to me, and better than a friend.”

“How miserable it is to think of poor Bessie, ensnared by some unaccountable spell into that house!” observed Lady Edith in a musing tone. “She has disappointed me sadly; yet her conduct is mere delirium, kept up by those who are resolved to divide the poor girl from every natural duty or affection. How I should like to see her once more.”

Great ladies do very odd, free and easy things sometimes—at least so thought Lady Edith, who was not in general very easily astonished, when she received next morning, a note from Lady Eaglescairn, beginning “Dear Lady Edith.” This cordial commencement was followed by a statement made in a tone of friendly familiarity, that Sir Allan McAlpine was expected at the Castle next week, in order to canvass the county, which would occupy ten times more time than he had to spare, but that she and Lord Eaglescairn hoped Lady Edith would come immediately to pass a few days with them, and bring Miss Farinelli to meet her old companion, with whom she had been so long ago associated.

A strange conflict in the warm heart of Lady Edith took place after reading this very unexpected note, and the colour rushed over her whole face with surprise and perplexity. Pride and prudence bid her reject an invitation unwillingly given, evidently with the sole object of securing Beatrice; and what the intention of these Popish intriguers could be, in using this manœuvre to secure the presence of her young *protégée*, seemed very unaccountable. At the same time it was evident that the sole terms on which the priestly masters of Sir Allan would sanction his having any intercourse with herself, were that she should accept this rather peremptory invitation to Eaglescairn Castle; and Lady Edith, her heart overflowing

with the most touching recollections of old times, resolved, *coute qui coute*, to go. "I must see Allan once again before the irrevocable vows are upon him; he seems hopelessly lost to us, and to himself; but still, Beatrice, while we can pray, we must not cease to hope! I have a perfect reliance on the clear-sighted steadiness of your faith, and feel no apprehension in exposing you to the ordeal of living some days at Eaglescairn; therefore, let us go."

CHAPTER XXII.

"And all in high baronial pride,
A life both dull and dignified."

LADY EDITH'S heart fluttered, with an unusual feeling of shyness, when she heard the loud-toned bell which heralded her arrival before the grand Castle-of-Otranto-looking towers and massive gates of Eaglescairn Castle; and Beatrice wished for a moment that she could have joined the herd of deer which timidly retreated into the thicket as she approached. It was a noble, impressive structure, though stern and gloomy in aspect. Nothing indeed could be more grand, more beautiful, or more dismal, than the long range of arched windows and fortified turrets. These were washed at their base by a rapid stream, which fell glittering down the mountain side, like a shower of silver, and whirled, with a pleasant rushing noise, like laughter itself, gurgling and chafing over its rocky bed, till lost in the distant ocean. The wooded mountains rose in rugged grandeur above the gigantic cliffs of Clanmarina, and the banks in summer were enlivened by groups of wild flowers clinging to the old grey rocks, or scattered beneath the gnarled oaks and fluttering birch-trees.

A numerous cluster of powdered servants in gorgeous liveries appeared in the stately entrance-hall, and Lady Edith, her heart filled with the hope of seeing Sir Allan, felt herself almost absently witnessing the assiduous attentions paid by Lord and Lady Eaglescairn to Beatrice, while a very stiff and scanty portion of civility fell to her own share. It required no miraculous degree of clairvoyance to show Lady Edith that there was an intention, if possible, to take exclusive possession of Beatrice during this visit. Their two rooms, when the visitors were conducted to see them, were as far apart as possible; but not a momentary doubt crossed the mind of Lady Edith, in considering this evident plan more deliberately alone, that her beloved young *protégée* would be unalterably constant to the faith and affections of her childhood, whatever means might be used to ensnare her from them.

Beatrice looked surpassingly beautiful, with the shy bright glance of her splendid eyes, and the heightened colour which burned on her cheek, deepened to scarlet by the agitation of her entrance into a house which she had so long looked at with an almost superstitious awe, as seen from the distant, humble, happy home of all her own past life. She gazed with apprehensive solemnity at the portraits of saints and martyrs round the walls, as well as at the grotesque-looking portraits of many an ancient Earl who had flourished within these gloomy walls since the days of the Crusaders. On a black marble pedestal at one end of the drawing-room stood the cross which had been borne by Godfrey, first Lord of Iona, at the siege of Acre, and the tables around it were littered with flowers, music, magazines, new publications, and expensive toys.

Nothing could exceed the stateliness and formality of Lady Edith's reception, to whom Lady Eaglescairn made a perfectly unsurpassable courtesy, while Lord Eaglescairn, in his odd, abrupt way, said,

"It is useless to say we are happy to see you, as I never invite any one here, but those that I wish to come. Lady Edith, you and I have kept our distance like a couple of mile-stones these many long years, but we are both looking younger and handsomer than ever! I have lived two lifetimes myself, for so many men die before thirty, that being myself a moss-grown old man of sixty now, my life has been as long as two."

"Then, as I am far on for eighty," replied Lady Edith, smiling, "I ought to count for three; and very interesting lives they have all been, the last stage perhaps the most so."

Lady Eaglescairn having, with ostentatious condescension, welcomed Beatrice into her rather formidable presence, seemed anxious, in a tone of benignant superiority, and with two-handed cordiality, to make her feel at home, as well as to extinguish all recollection of Lady Edith's presence from her memory, as soon as the common decencies of civility had been paid. While Lady Eaglescairn was condescending enough to continue her conversation with Beatrice, the dialogue chiefly consisted of her asking a rapid succession of rather impertinent questions; and it seemed as if there could not be a human being on earth whom it would be possible for Lady Eaglescairn to consider her own equal.

The sight of even a trifling occupation is always interesting, but no one in the large cavern of a drawing-room at Eaglescairn seemed to have the shadow of an employment. Beatrice, now for the first time trying her wing in general society, looked round with wonder at the circle of loungers among whom she had been so suddenly precipitated. The whole party were occupied in teaching a little white French poodle to beg for a bit of biscuit, and laughing at his successful appeals to the compassion of his master, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, who now seemed to consider Beatrice an old friend. The instant he could do so without becoming conspicuous, the lively

laughter-loving stranger, full of life and elasticity, crossed the room, and placed himself beside Beatrice, saying in a tone of animated welcome—

"It is easier to tear a limpet from the solid rock, than you from your quiet home! Why would you not come? Were you afraid that we should not like you, or that you could not like us?"

"Perhaps both," replied Beatrice, her face beautifully flushed; but a smile glittering in her eyes, "I am, like you, very shy."

"We are not at all formidable when you know us thoroughly," continued her lively companion, with a laugh of triumphant happiness; "but you have now at first a look of most comical discomfort! Do not expect too much from us. None of the ladies here are Corinnes, and I am the only gentleman who can be compared to Sir Philip Sidney or Sir Charles Grandison. Let me tell you who all these people are!"

"I am afraid, from that satirical look, you are going to be very ill-natured upon them!"

"I am neither ill-natured nor good-natured, but sternly truthful; and am ready to say, if that will please you, that all the ladies here are beautiful and all the gentlemen clever. You look most savagely determined not to listen," replied he, glancing at Beatrice's bright smiling countenance. "You always seem inclined to treat me as the dog treats the monkey on his back, trying to throw me off; but I have an iron will and make everything bend to it. That is a way I have got, and therefore you shall invariably find it least troublesome to let me enjoy my own will at once; for sooner or later I must have it. All my life I have walked arm in arm with good-fortune, and never was balked in anything that I had set my heart on!"

"You are a wizard then, I suppose, or perhaps only a magician; the one can tell what is to happen, and the other brings it about. I like obstinate and determined people, for I am sometimes totally unpersuadable myself."

"So I think, indeed; for we had to submit to your own terms before you would come here to let us have the pleasure of admiring you! Donna Beatrice would not stir without her excellent Duenna, Lady Edith, and if you are not exceedingly civil to me I know how to punish you by neglecting her. What did you apprehend from coming alone? Are we enemies, whose bread and salt you would not eat?" asked her companion, humorously working himself up to a perfect paroxysm of mingled amusement and irritation. "I did not close an eye for several nights after you refused to come."

"Of course! You look quite emaciated and melancholy in consequence!" replied Beatrice, slyly. "But nevertheless you can still subscribe some spare nonsense to amuse us all!"

"Surely no young lady ever was or ever will be insensible to such devoted assiduity as mine! I once had a friend as cavalierly treated by the young lady he admired most in the world, as you

treat me, and, poor fellow! he went at last to the place where he died."

"Indeed!" said Beatrice earnestly. "Where did he go?"

"To the Highland moors; where a gun burst and killed him. See now what you may bring me to. Pray take warning, Miss Farinelli; but instead of doing so, you seem merely inclined to say to poor inoffensive me now, as uncle Toby did to the fly that tormented him, 'Go! I'll not hurt a hair of thy head!'"

"You invent so many speeches and feelings for me, that really I need not take the trouble of thinking or speaking at all while you remain here," said Beatrice, the most beautiful smile quivering round her mouth, and dimpling on her cheek, that any young countenance could have displayed. "Is your visit here to last as long as ours?"

"Visit! I am at home. Nobody recognises such an absentee as I have been. Do you still seriously and in good earnest suppose me Mr. O'Brien? That is delightfully romantic. But I must put an end to the incognito, and introduce myself," said Mr. O'Brien, assuming a look of grave decorum, which ended in a laugh of almost frantic glee, "'My name is Norval,' or at least it is Edward Lord Iona; and as very little good is said among you Protestants at Clanmarina of poor me, or of even the best in this house, I carefully concealed my birth, parentage, and education, till you and Lady Edith were both safely caged in our Popish fortress, where I hope you may long continue willing captives."

Lord Iona enjoyed his own little practical joke so joyously that he had evidently forgotten how to leave off laughing, as he added in a tone of polite risibility, "When you want a pen mended, a book cut open, a bouquet gathered, a new novel read aloud, a song accompanied, a harp-string repaired, or an escort on horseback, I am your slave. Do not reject my services," said Lord Iona, in an under tone, "or I shall be reduced to absolute despair, or at least to hopeless ennui."

As Beatrice rose to depart, he tried to detain her, and sang in an under-tone, but in most beautiful cadence, these words:—

"One struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One long last sigh to love and thee,
Then back to busy life again."

When Beatrice was shown to her room an hour before luncheon, to take off her bonnet, she thought with smiling pleasure of her agreeable companion, Lord Iona; and certainly gave a glance of more than usual interest at her own face in the mirror. Beatrice found, instead of Lady Edith's maid in attendance, one of Lady Eaglescairn's, a prim and formal personage in the dress of "a religieuse," who with officious, though very majestic civility, had unpacked her boxes, and said that Lady Edith's room being so distant, she had "her Ladyship's orders to attend on Miss Farinelli."

In the progress of time this personage turned out so well read and so well informed, that it became evident she had once seen much better days; and a suspicion soon took possession of Beatrice that a Jesuit lady had been placed about her for proselyting purposes, who merely acted the part of Abigail "for one day only, and by particular desire!" Beatrice felt grievously disappointed, that if any one was to officiate in doing the very little she required, it was obviously not to be Bessie McDonald, for whom she now ventured to make inquiry.

"You mean the new girl who is under me?" replied the consequential severe-looking attendant, in a tone of disdainful civility to Beatrice, who felt rebuked. "She is not fit to wait upon strangers yet, and her Ladyship desires that she shall remain entirely under my own eye."

"Could I see her?" asked Beatrice timidly; "she was long one of my scholars at Clanmarina, and ——"

"I'm afraid not," replied Madame Mettarie, assuming the short, peremptory offended tone of a true toilet-tyrant, "Father Eustace gave very particular directions that she should be as solitary and silent as possible all this month. She has to use the discipline twice every day, and Bessie McDonald herself has now requested that her bed may be like that used by St. Rose of Lima, stuffed with knotty lumps of wood, and broken pieces of pottery. She is resolved to be a true Saint."

"Poor Bessie!" exclaimed Beatrice in a tone of pity and consternation: "how is she to sleep on such a couch as that?"

"Why should she sleep?" asked Mrs. Mettarie in a fanatical tone; "Sister Mary of Sicily used a pillow of thorns; and our good St. Peter of Alcantara, during forty years, slept only an hour, or at most an hour and a half each night."

"But the poor girl cannot possibly live under such austerities!"

"There is no occasion to live. Those who would be eminent saints must soar above the love of life," replied Madame Mettarie, in a tone of superiority. "We all in this house wear coarse hair shirts from the neck to the knees, like that of the exemplary saint, Sancia Cariglio."

"You had much better put on hair petticoats instead," said Beatrice, unable to help smiling. "How can you think such a useless bodily torture meritorious?"

"We do not think," replied Madame Mettarie, solemnly. "Perfect obedience to Father Eustace requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect."

"So it appears!" answered Beatrice, indignantly. "Did our Creator give an intellect to every individual in this house, that only one may use it?"

"Any layman presuming to follow his own opinion, follows the opinion of a fool," replied Madame Mettarie. "When St. Francis commanded his disciples to plant cabbages with their roots upper-

most, they obeyed; and he obliged brother Matthew to whirl round and round till he fell on the floor; but such blind obedience is good for us. Above all, we should seek to be poor in money, and offend not against poverty, but give all we have to Father Eustace for the Church. Every shilling held back is a sin. Silence, solitude, and poverty are all we may desire, and our prayer should be that of Ignatius, 'Show me, Lord, the way in which I ought to walk, and though you should give me a dog for my guide, I will follow him.'"

Beatrice was very glad to be herself left solitary and silent both, when Madame Mettarie swept herself, in a state of humble self-importance, out of the room, and she soon after proceeded to try the difficult navigation of finding her way through the winding, innumerable passages and fragments of stairs to Lady Edith's room. Beatrice felt herself a perfect Ariadne threading through such a labyrinth! She had either gone up or down the wrong flight, and was turning to retrace her mistaken footsteps, when she observed a nun-like figure clothed in a black serge gown, a rope round her waist, and a white conventual-looking head-dress like that of a corpse, walking slowly and very feebly along a narrow passage at some distance, and as she paused to observe this picturesque-looking apparition, the object of her notice stopped near a door, and glanced round before she disappeared within it. Beatrice, to her astonishment, at once then recognised the pale and emaciated but still beautiful countenance of Bessie McRonald. A sudden impulse which she could not restrain made her rush forward, and though the door had been hurriedly closed behind her former favourite, Beatrice without a moment's hesitation threw it open and entered, determined at length to satisfy her mind whether the misguided girl in leaving home were blameable or unfortunate, or both, or neither.

In a small half-dark room, without carpet, curtains, or a single article of even necessary comfort, Bessie lay prostrate her whole length on the bare floor, and it almost appeared to the startled mind of Beatrice that she was licking the deal boards with her tongue.

"Can this poor girl be really quite insane? Does she not require medical advice, or medical restraint?" thought Beatrice, advancing resolutely up to Bessie, and gently taking her hand. The girl gazed hurriedly up, an expression of abject terror at first stamped on every feature; but starting and colouring, with a look of almost speechless amazement at Beatrice, she covered up her face with her long dishevelled hair, and exclaimed in an under tone, "Miss Farinelli! I thought it had been Father Eustace! He comes here every day for an hour to see me alone—quite alone. Oh, Miss Farinelli, you must go! Pardon me! He would be so angry to see you or any one here! I must see him alone!—always alone!"

Bessie covered her face with her hands. They trembled visibly, and catching up a crucifix from a little movable oratory which stood near, she deluged it with her tears. A long silence ensued, during which Bessie's agitation seemed if possible to increase. Her breath

came in short quick gasps, and the little of her face which remained visible was white as death.

"Bessie," said Beatrice, in a tone of mournful kindness, "I had determined not to leave this house without seeing you, and this early meeting seems quite providential. Tell your old friend and true well-wisher,—are you happy here?"

No answer came, but her whole frame shook with emotion; her hands filled with her long fair hair, which hung in masses down her cheek, became more firmly clenched against her face; and a deep convulsive sob, in spite of an evident struggle, forced itself out and would be heard.

"I love and pity you," continued Beatrice kindly. "You made a well-meant but perfectly uncalled for sacrifice in forsaking home and all who were your real friends. Do you not wish now to see once more your good old uncle?"

"If I could but die!" said Bessie, in a low hurried whisper, and her whole aspect was one of sinking misery; "the sooner the better!—the sooner the better!—and it will be soon. I have a vow to taste nothing to-day, but it takes longer than I thought to die of sleeplessness and starvation. Look here!"

Bessie tore open her dress, and showed that beneath a hair shift she wore a large iron cross, spiked with nails, which fretted the delicate white skin off her neck. "There! you see that! I neither eat nor sleep; but I have such visions! Yes! I am happy!" said Bessie, with a ghastly smile, and with her eye fixed on the open door at which appeared the dark, handsome, but very stern countenance of Father Eustace, his eyes on the ground, his hands crossed, and his face, if possible, longer and graver than ever. "Miss Farinelli!" added Bessie, in a tone of solemn excitement, which seemed to Beatrice mere mid-summer madness; "we shall meet no more on earth, but after my death I shall appear to you! I shall watch over you! I shall—"

"Surely, Sir!" said Beatrice, turning to Father Eustace, with deep emotions of pity for the poor delirious girl, while he listened in scornful silence, "you cannot consider poor Bessie in her rational senses. She is not at this moment a responsible being! Her relations ought to be sent for. She has an uncle who would die for her—a mother who doats on her—a—"

"The low grovelling attachments of this life are not for a mind exalted as hers," replied Father Eustace, pointing an obstinate looking finger towards the agitated girl. "She remains here from choice. Tell this lady herself, my daughter, that you never knew happiness till now. Tell her your real feelings on the subject."

"Yes: I am happy! I am quite happy!" answered Bessie, forcing a short hysterical laugh; "I saw such a vision in the garden yesterday, bright and shining as the sun. I am very happy."

She clasped her hands with a look of delirious enthusiasm and looked upwards, her brilliant eyes glowing with unnatural fire, and

the colour rising to her cheeks like waves of the sea. Father Eustace and Beatrice gazed at the beautiful visionary with very different feelings, and while a tear of pity rolled silently and heavily down the cheek of Beatrice, Father Eustace looked on with a smile of triumphant satisfaction. A moment more and Bessie sunk upon the floor in strong convulsions. Months afterwards did Beatrice remember in trembling horror the shrieking laughter with which that poor girl kept for ever repeating, in anxious obedience to Father Eustace's command, "Yes; I am happy! I am happy! oh yes; I am happy!"

"May all those we love be protected from such happiness!" exclaimed Lady Edith, with solemn fervour, when she heard the agitated narrative of Beatrice. "That father-and-daughter system in the Romish Church is an outrage on nature, and language cannot express its evils."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish and an aching head."—POPE.

To Lady Edith Tremorne all the withered joys and hopes of her past life had been like autumn leaves that fertilize the soil and bring out its noblest fruits. In contrast to her look of graceful and intellectual simplicity in the assembled party, no one ever had an air of more insolent prosperity than the ultra-dignified Lady Eaglescain, when, after having returned from her forenoon prayers at the Popish Chapel, where she had been prostrate on the bare stone-floor before the image of St. Bridget for an hour, she now with queen-like stateliness accompanied her guests to luncheon. How seldom do those whose privilege it might be to render a circle pleasant, deny themselves the gratification of making it disagreeable! Lady Eaglescain had that most intolerable of all self-conceit, which is displayed by talking continually in a pompous self-satisfied tone of her own humility; and now with a look of prodigious patronage, she took the arm of Beatrice to accompany her through the large old marble hall. It looked lofty and dull as an empty church, and Lady Eaglescain spoke to her young guest with the sort of acknowledged superiority and kindness which she might have used towards a favourite little spaniel. In general, no smile is so gratifying as that which it is difficult to gain, and those who have, like Lady Eaglescain, a genius for rendering themselves disagreeable, excite so pleasing a surprise when it is their whim to be pleasant, that it tells with double effect; but Beatrice felt more the annoyance of seeing Lady Edith neglected than the flattering preference lavished on herself.

Beatrice, in a state of total discomfort, took her place at the pompous luncheon-table. She had fallen into a perfectly statue-like silence, being above all, vexed and astonished to see the marked neglect shown to the person she venerated above all on earth, though Lady Edith's own distinguished nature prevented her feeling at all humiliated by the ill-manners of another. Beatrice, contrasting her own happy home with the present scene of magnificent exclusiveness, the grandest and dullest entertainment she had ever sat down to, thought how truly it has been said, "Better is a crust of bread where love is, than a stalled ox and hated therewith."

Lady Edith seemed almost to read the mind of Beatrice, for at this moment their eyes met, and the smile of her beloved benefactress, full of dignity and sweetness, was the only sunbeam in the room. One lady after another dropped in to luncheon with a quite-at-home look, and sat down in lazy silence, to eat with uncommunicative appetite; and if any one spoke at all it was in a whisper to her nearest neighbour, while anxiously and fastidiously surveying every dish within the range of their sight.

At length an empty seat next to Beatrice became suddenly occupied by her lively friend Lord Iona, whom Lady Eaglescairn had evidently expected to sit there, for she smiled with her most benignant smile as he appropriated it to himself and as he turned to Beatrice saying, "I am coming to torment you again, Miss Farinelli, and to have some of our usual conversation about nothing! Let me help you now to discuss the knife and fork question. While I remain in this house, you shall never be without a shadow."

"Then I might sell my own, like Peter Schlemihl," replied Beatrice, laughing. "But the poor man missed his sadly when gone!"

"As you would miss me. Well! you put on a stern forbidding mask to me externally, but I hope it is in jest, and that a smiling face is behind! It really is kind of you to come here and enliven the slowest of all houses!"

"Perhaps it may be my misfortune, to make it still slower!"

"That would be quite beyond human power. Father Eustace, who rules in this Castle, is not, like the Vicar of Wakefield, an admirer of happy human faces. There are, however, in this tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee society of my mother's favourite friends, some rather diverting persons, if properly studied. As Rochefoucault says, 'People generally make themselves ridiculous, not for what they are, but for what they pretend to be.' Since you have made your *débüt* to-day on our stage, I must introduce you to the actors, and as I never tell fibs even in jest, you must be told how blotted and disfigured is the page of most lives here by folly and affectation. I shall give you an inquisitorial survey of all these people's private histories and characters."

"Not here! not now in their presence!" whispered Beatrice hurriedly, and then added with an arch smile of humour, "unless, indeed, you choose to begin with your own."

"What a knavish suggestion of yours to draw out all my egotism. Well! ask ten thousand questions, and let me answer them. After that, since truth is truth, I shall tell you all my good qualities more truly than if I were a magnetoscope, beginning, as autobiographies usually do,—'I was born of respectable parents in the county of Blankshire——'"

"To end with all your most confidential letters and most private remarks!" added Beatrice, giving a low musical laugh. "I should be quite afraid of becoming celebrated myself now, in case some hungry author might poison me to make a profit of my memoirs."

"Nobody escapes appearing in the press, and few wish to escape. Observe my cousin Anne's Popish governess at the other end of this table in white, fit to be a frontispiece to the 'Magasin des Modes.' She always wears a muslin robe, having read that it is the usual costume of heroines, and tries to look as like as possible to a blushing rosebud. Anne says Miss Turton asked one day at the milliner's for a 'sentimental bonnet,' and her governess-ship keeps a diary for no eye but her own, which is to be published as soon as she takes the veil in a convent, to which she is going soon at Inverness. That will be a grand piece of excitement for her next month. Miss Turton is vain to perfect insanity, and her great object in life is, to cause a sensation, which she will do for a day, when plunging into her cell finally at St Bridget's."

"What a strange governess to select for the young heiress! I thought Lady Stratharden had been a very pious Protestant?"

"So she is! as good and well-meaning a fiddle-faddle old dowager as exists, and perfectly heart-broken about Anne. My mother must have been mistaken, for she, in a disastrous hour, recommended Miss Turton as a strict Protestant, her only fault that she was too bigoted against all papists and Popery. My mother's late brother, Lord Stratharden, was a papist, but his widow had a right which she greatly valued, to educate her daughter in her own faith. At all hours of the day now, and sometimes only too late in the evening, my pretty cousin Anne may be seen walking alone with Father Eustace in his character of confessor, their heads down, their steps slow, their whole aspect indicating a sort of spiritual flirtation, and the only point on which Anne and her governess differ, my aunt tells me, is a bitter jealousy which has arisen between them relating to Father Eustace. As my cousin inherits all the enormous Stratharden estates, she is well worth entrapping, and no pains have been spared. It will visibly be the death of that good, religious, only-too-indulgent mother, my aunt, now quite superseded; but do what she may, the governess, the pupil, and the *s'en-disant* 'Father' cannot be separated, for habit has caused Lady Anne to fall into their grasp as if she were in a man-trap. Yet we often laugh ready to die over Miss Turton's absurdities, and you may hear how Anne is now appealing to Miss Turton's opinions that she may laugh at them. The governess fancies herself a

poetess, and having strung some jingling rhymes together once, Sonnets to the Moon, the Stars, the Snow-drops, the Crystal Palace, and the London Fog, she enclosed them to 'Gordon's Magazine,' saying she was not 'a poor author in want of her dinner, but a poet inspired by sentiment and enthusiasm.' The editor wrote back, in the usual polite tone of rejection, that these were without exception the most beautiful verses he had ever read, but they did not exactly suit his pages."

"How very kind not to unmask a pleasing delusion!" said Beatrice. "I never do."

"It is most diverting to put Miss Turton into a state of beautiful confusion by catching her sometimes gazing at herself in a stream, which she thinks more poetical than a mirror, warbling an air very much out of tune, and trying to persuade herself that she is an Arcadian Shepherdess, fond of reclining on the damp grass, and picking wild flowers," continued Lord Iona. "Miss Turton said to me lately, in her usual seraphic tone of affectation, 'I never slumber when I can avoid it. I like best to be surprised by sleep, and instead of a pillow, to repose my cheek on a book of devotion.'"

"It must be very irritating if no one coincides in Miss Turton's high estimate of her own merits," said Beatrice, unable to resist an extempore fit of laughing: "Miss Turton probably lives under a continual sense of injury and of injustice from an unappreciating world."

"And it is this mass of affectations and absurdities, that after having wasted some years in spoiling the education of my cousin Anne, is going to retire within the walls of a convent as too good for the world. She means to set herself up in the character of a Popish saint; as those people who are least fit for domestic and Christian duties at home, are those who become canonized at Rome."

Miss Turton at this moment turned ostentatiously round to the consequential-looking butler, and said in a whisper, very audible, though she affected secrecy, "Pray inquire for me, as this is Friday, whether these whittings are fried with butter or with lard? Also, if the roast potatoes were done under the roast beef, or only under the wild duck." Seeing Lord Iona listening with assumed gravity, Miss Turton added to him, in a tone of superlative excellence, "I was quite taken in last Friday by an omelette cooked with gravy."

"Little things are great to little minds," muttered Lord Iona. "Your luncheon, Miss Turton, would not satisfy a sylph. My fasting consists in never eating more than is good for me; but pray what authority have you in Scripture for preferring fish and wild-duck to beef? May you not as well make a religion of eating rice instead of potatoes? Any one might call it a religious duty always to wear pink ribbons rather than blue, or to drink cider rather than tea; but unless such distinctions are commanded in the Bible, they are no part of Christianity. When you become a nun, Miss Turton, I do wonder how you will feel after the show is over

the crowd dispersed, the excitement subsided, and yourself forgotten. I hear you are then to take a situation as your own housemaid, 'o sweep your cell and make your bed! I dare say the maids here would gladly lend you a broom, and accept your aid in what they call 'doing out the rooms.' Had you been an Indian widow, I should certainly have witnessed your burning in a *suttee*."

The attention of Beatrice became at this moment caught, by observing the intense interest with which Lady Edith was listening to a dialogue between Lady Eaglescain and the Duchess of Dorchester, whose ideas at first strayed about from subject to subject, as a bird hops from twig to twig, while the particularly matter-of-fact tone of her mind made her Grace's conversation seem dry and tasteless as a stale biscuit. At length she said to her attentive hostess, in a tone of most benignant cordiality, and suppressing her customary yawn:

"You know, dear Lady Eaglescain, I always am so obliged for the favour of your advice; and though that curate you kindly recommended very soon left our church for Romanism, and carried over some of our most influential tenants along with him, still that was no fault of yours. By the way, do let me thank you now for this very perfect nursery governess, who has arrived to-day. So *à-propos* your finding her at once! She seems beyond all praise, as if made to order, and it was wonderful to find a disengaged English woman in this neighbourhood, where it could so little be hoped. The Duke says she is the most sensible woman he ever spoke to. Her conversation is one ever-flowing tide of complaisance. She agrees with him in everything, and has a horror of the Jesuits! Excuse me—but that remark—that monstrosity slipped off my Protestant tongue by accident, and quite promiscuously."

Beatrice felt surprised during this rambling speech from the duchess, to perceive that Lady Eaglescain fell into a state of embarrassment which it was evident she could neither conceal nor suppress. Her Grace of Dorchester's gratitude continued in a most voluble state of animation, which evidently increased the confusion of her greatly perplexed hostess, though Lady Eaglescain might as easily have intercepted the Falls of Niagara in a tea-tup, as attempted to impede the flow of her Grace's animated communications.

"My eldest boy is charmed with some pretty books the new governess showed him! I had not time to do more than glance at them, but the little allegory of 'The Golden Fountain' is enchanting,—also 'The Dream of Delights,' 'The Torn Flower' is very touching, and likewise 'The Guardian Spirit.' It contains a beautiful frontispiece of a child with its eyes bandaged and its hands tied behind, but carefully led up an impossible precipice by a sort of fairy with wings. I did not clearly catch the meaning, but she says these books are all excellent little Protestant stories, and so improving."

"Allow me to say, that I think the 'Goody Two Shoes,' or 'Sandford and Merton,' of our own nursery days, were much safer studies for the young, and quite as true as these, which have recently led, in some sad instances, to very disastrous consequences," observed Lady Edith, in an undertone to the Duchess, while Lady Eaglescain was giving some directions to the butler. "The very books your grace has named, were lent to the children of my industrial school by an English schoolmistress there last summer, who deceived me as to her real faith, and misled one of my most promising pupils."

"Not a Papist?" whispered the Duchess in a tone of unmitigated horror. "What would my Duke say, if such a thing ever happened in our family! But it is impossible to deceive either him or me. We have all our eyes open! In these times it is necessary to be very circumspect. Excuse me, Lady Eaglescain—you and I have agreed to differ and be friends. My Duke always says that we Tudors are as old a Protestant family, as you De Bathes are Roman Catholic, therefore we could never forgive ourselves if my boy,—likely to have such a stake in this country,—were in his very infancy charged to the muzzle with religious controversy. You tell me that there are the highest testimonials to Mrs. Lor——"

"Yes! yes!" interrupted Lady Eaglescain, hurriedly, while a deep blush overspread her countenance, and she almost buried it over a large tumbler of water. "Your governess has many,—volumes of testimonials"——

"Particularly from your excellent friend"——

"Yes! from everybody!—from all my most esteemed correspondents,—Lady Linlithgow,—and Lady——"

"But especially," persisted the unstoppable Duchess, who was not accustomed to follow the lead of any one; "my duke and I pin our faith implicitly on the recommendation of Mr. Clinton."

Lady Edith exchanged a look of consternation with Beatrice, and then the dark suspicion that hovered in their minds becoming confirmed, Lady Edith anxiously fixed her penetrating eyes on Lady Eaglescain, who seemed reading out of her plate as she bent down over it, and replied hesitatingly, "I cannot answer for Mrs. Lorraine's morals, but her principles are excellent. I believe Mr. Clinton knows her well and esteems her much. He has great reason to do so. She had a severe struggle of mind on some religious points which he piloted her through with most exemplary wisdom and kindness. You may rest assured she is a perfect treasure."

It now flashed into the memory of Beatrice, that as she drove through Clanmarina that morning, the little village-shop of Mrs. Lorraine was unexpectedly shut up, and had a deserted, uninhabited aspect; therefore this highly extolled Protestant governess, with a bushel of testimonials, was evidently no other than Mrs. Lorraine, a suspicion which became confirmed by the final words of the poor misguided duchess.

"Well! it is such a comfort to have Mr. Clinton's warrant, for

really I do not fully understand everything on these subjects, and might have been deceived. Your *protégée* tells me she is in mourning for several near relations, therefore begs to live quite secluded during some weeks, that she may give attention night and day to my boy till this party disperses. The doctors have forbid her to eat any animal food. In fact she seems willing to live on a crust, and to sleep on the floor. I never saw any one more accommodating, and so humble that she never lifts her eyes from the ground."

"That is what Jesuits call 'the custody of the eyes,' " observed Lady Edith, quietly. "I never yet found any one to be trusted who could not look me in the face, eye to eye, as well as mind to mind."

"But," whispered the duchess, earnestly, "pray tell me, Lady Edith, do you think Mrs. Lorraine capable of assuming two characters?"

"Not only two, but twenty," replied Lady Edith. "You would very much underrate Mrs. Lorraine's powers as an actress, by supposing her limited to so small a range of parts. Mrs. Lorraine belongs to that fearful religion which gives a license to tell any lie, if it be for the good of yourself or others, and you may read now in the life of a certain favourite Papist, Saint Alphonso Liguori, this very un-English and un-Christian opinion. 'For a just cause, it is lawful to confirm equivocation with an oath.' Think, then, what hope there is that Mrs. Lorraine will ever betray her own secret to you, or declare truly who and what she is."

"But," said the duchess, incredulously, "you do not seriously believe that anything calling itself a religion can teach immorality."

"As to that, Lady Eaglescain herself says she cannot answer for Mrs. Lorraine's morals, but that her principles are excellent. Read the lives of the five saints of 1829, and you will find that they had no morals. According to the creed of that sect, a son may rejoice at his father being murdered, if thereby good accrues from it to the Church; and when a servant thinks himself underpaid in respect to wages, he may help himself to the difference. If Mrs. Lorraine thinks her services to you worth 100*l.* per annum, and you give her only 50*l.*, she is sole judge of her own merits, and may rob you of the balance in any way most convenient. Do not be deterred by the almost romantic villany of these doctrines, from believing that they are taught now by the Jesuits in England, for I have collected chapter and verse from their own writings, more than I dare repeat. Any day your grace may see my little volume, and then 'by their works ye shall know them.' Some of their books are a perfect Paganism of corruption, frightful to those who examine, and incredible to those who do not."

While this conversation was going on, two gentlemen, who seemed quite at home in the house, though they had arrived only an hour before, were seated together in the embrasure of a distant window, carrying on a low earnest conversation, evidently forgetful

that any human being was in the room but themselves. The clear hard voice of the elder, all power and no expression, sounded in an almost continual flood of energetic discourse. It was but seldom interrupted, and only for a short moment, by the very harmonious and beautiful tone of his young companion, who seemed listening to the other with reverential awe. At length they both rose, while the young man, with evident feebleness of health and strength, languidly strolled towards the luncheon table. A mass of night-black hair overshadowed a thin emaciated countenance, so perfectly colourless to the very lips, that it seemed like a beautiful mask of alabaster, and he never raised his eyes till the last remark of Lady Edith reached his ear. He suddenly, then, looked up with a start of astonishment, the colour rushed in a flood of scarlet to his very forehead, his eyes became lighted up with an expression of rapture, and rushing with hurried steps to where she sat, he almost frantically clasped the hands of Lady Edith in his own, and staggering into a chair fainted away.

"Allan! dear Allan!" exclaimed Lady Edith in accents of inexpressible grief, as she gazed with all the sorrow that a mother could have felt at the lifeless wreck before her: "Can this be Allan? Oh! how changed!"

Beatrice had stood up with all the other guests in consternation and confusion, while her spirit at once discerned who was the heart-broken and wasted being, a momentary glimpse of whom had already excited her sympathising pity. This then was her long-desired meeting with the associate of her childhood,—loved as a brother, prayed for since his boyhood, and now probably lost to her companionship for ever. Tears coursed each other irresistibly down her cheek, pale with grief and agitation, as she tried to conquer, or at least to conceal her agitation; but there was one eye fixed upon her with searching interest, not to be avoided, and that was the eye of her new friend, Lord Iona, who contrived with apparent carelessness to screen her from observation. She felt the delicacy of his considerate attention in that trying moment, and with a grateful glance more than rewarded him.

Mr. Ambrose now advanced, and stood beside his insensible pupil and nephew. His countenance was perfectly placid and immovable without one such momentary indication of human feeling as any mortal face might naturally have now displayed, but assuming an indisputable right to act for Sir Allan, he tacitly excluded the attentions of the other guests, and only noticed the presence of Lady Edith, by taking from her hand a glass of wine she had poured out for Allan, saying, "Pardon me, Madam! My nephew fasts all this week!"

"What!" asked Lady Edith, "neither wine nor cordials, if he were to die for want of them?"

"Let me entreat," answered Mr. Ambrose, "that as Allan's nerves are exceedingly weak, you will not appear when he recovers. Thi-

unlucky necessity for our returning here has quite upset him. Allan was most unaccountably low during our whole journey from Rome, and must remain some days secluded in his own private room now, to recruit."

"No wonder he needs it," whispered Lord Iona to Beatrice, in his wisest tone; "I am singular enough to know that I am myself mortal, but well do I guess the sort of thing McAlpine goes through, from my own experience. I nearly sunk under it myself; but Father Eustace, then my confessor, was proud of my 'frost-bit feet and dirty serge,' crusts of bread for a fortnight, and midnight vigils. As a boy I used to pick up the crumbs thrown out to the sparrows, and often slept standing or walking. McAlpine is hardly ever now quite awake, for sleep steals over him against his will, or without his knowledge, but one cannot trick him into unconsciously eating."

Beatrice soon after found Lady Edith in the quiet sanctuary of her own room, where prostrate on her knees she wept such tears of anguish as only strong minds can ever shed. She now believed that Allan loved her as before, loved his uncle's memory, and preserved all the kind affections of his boyhood; but she saw how boundless was the authoritative influence of Mr. Ambrose; how deeply Allan's faith had been tampered with, and how small her own hopes could be of gaining access to the dear object of her early instructions and subsequent prayers.

Sir Allan and Mr. Ambrose appeared no more that day, and nothing could be more strange to Lady Edith, with her retired habits, than to find herself in so very gay a circle and so obviously an unwelcome guest, though she now felt more than at first, that being invited, duty and affection bound her to remain so long as Beatrice did, if not also for the sake of Allan, so dear to her memory, but whose name now was never heard.

In the whirlpool of small talk around, Lady Edith, though extinguished herself, derived much amusement from listening with intelligent curiosity to the best talkers near, and especially the Lord Iona, laughing and chatting with Beatrice, who never left the side of her benefactress, but always hovered near, all dimples and smiles, the admired of many admirers, while inexpressibly amused and surprised at the audacity of Lord Iona's wit, when once fairly started in a favourite vein of nonsense.

"I have a magical ring here, Miss Farinelli, which tells me," he said silyly, "all that everybody thinks of myself, and I am consulting it at this moment as to your opinion."

"What a mortifying answer it will give!" replied Beatrice, laughing. "No wonder you learn diffidence."

"There now you are immensely mistaken! I might safely agree, like the Sultana of the Arabian Nights, to lose my own head as soon as I cease to please, and," added he, bowing, "to be pleased."

"You seem very easily pleased with yourself and others," replied

Beatrice, jestingly ; " I carry a thermometer to tell me what I ought to think of myself, and it never rises above zero."

Lady Anne Darlington, at once, on the shortest notice, began a vehement, undying, boarding-school friendship for Beatrice on the most romantic model. They had already exchanged bouquets, and would probably be soon at the pitch of exchanging locks of hair, but meanwhile she astonished Beatrice by her very decided manner, her irrepressible ardour in the pursuit of amusement, her frolicksome vivacity, and her indefatigable flow of spirits. " I am so glad," she said next evening, " to find a person, place, or thing as young as myself in this old house !"

" It is a complete melo-drama, I suppose, with a ghost, an eastern turret, and a trap-stair," replied Beatrice smiling ; " very grand and very gloomy."

" Come, you seem both gentle and mirthful," said Lady Anne ; " let us be inseparable friends."

As the two young girls sat side by side, they grouped in beautiful contrast together on the sofa before Lady Edith, with Lord Iona entertaining the trio in his best style of nonsense on his favourite subject, Lady Anne's pet governess.

" Miss Turton is perfect in the art of looking religious. Her attitudes in the drawing-room always seem as if she were sitting for the picture of a saint. There, Anne ! look now ! your invaluable governess has her clasped hands resting on her lap, and her eyes slightly turned up in a state of transcendental enthusiasm ! Yet bring her back to common life, and no one is such a manufacturer of petty grievances, so given to take offence, and to imagine imaginary slights, as well as imaginary conquests. My whole life is one unsuccessful effort to prevent her being either in love with me or hating me."

" Poor soul !" said Lady Anne, bursting into a juvenile peal of laughter. " She has had three disappointments this year—all excellent speculations too !"

" Speculations !" asked Lord Iona, looking full of laughing intelligence. " What, in the railways !"

" Pshaw, George ! you know very well, the old story !" said Lady Anne, in a most fascinating half-petulant tone of humour. " She was always as romantic, you know, as any abigail on the stage. Miss Turton told me sentimentally yesterday, looking *à la* Siddons, and expanding her chest like an air cushion, with sighs, that her affections have been blighted !"

" Nonsense ! all our affections have been blighted ! everybody's are : yours are, mine are, Miss Farinelli's are. If everybody retires into a living grave who fancies their affections blighted, we shall have nobody left. I well remember last June, when Miss Turton intended in the first place to marry a Welsh curate, and in the second place failing him, a free church clergyman, both excellent men, but poorer than church mice, as neither had a church. Then

she thought herself engaged to Mr. Fitzgerald. He held the Episcopal Chapel at Inverness, and turned out to have been, from the first, a Jesuit Priest performing Protestant services by special dispensation from his superior. That is quite a common manœuvre now, against the Episcopal Church; and Mr. Fitzgerald, as a blind to conceal his being a Popish priest, pretended he was engaged to poor deluded Miss Turton. The Duke of Dorchester blew up the mine by recognising Mr. Fitzgerald as Father Dominick, from the College of the Sacred Heart, at Naples."

"That was Priest-craft and Jesuit-craft indeed!" exclaimed Beatrice with irrepressible indignation. "If the saints of Rome be such men what must the sinners be!"

"But Miss Turton, being thrown out of all situations, is now finally devoted to celibacy and Father Eustace!" added Lord Iona, watching the effect of what he said on Lady Anne, who coloured slightly and looked down. "When your confessor enters the room it becomes evident that the whole heart and soul of Miss Turton are engrossed with almost adoring interest, in catching his every word and action! In her estimation he is evidently a perfect demi-god, and as those whose feelings are most excitable on some points are naturally most excitable on all, your worthy governess has given up all her 'speculations,' for the one absorbing object of pleasing Father Eustace. Look now at her St. Agnes expression in gazing with adoration at this picture of St. Anthony, by Teniers!"

"What a tongue you have!" said Lady Anne, unable to resist the influence of her cousin's lively humour, and recovering her usual careless grace of manner. "I wonder in the convent how she will manage a long broom!"

"If she merely shut a door it was in an attitude fit to play the harp in, with simpering face and downcast eyes; but I have a vision before me now, of poor dear Miss Turton, next week virtuously walking to her convent chapel over the snow, without shoes or stockings, and living in a trance without food, till she become so spiritualized, that she is visibly suspended a little way up in the air, telling her beads at about a yard from the ground. She might as well attempt climbing to heaven on a rope of sand as to ascend by all her own absurd affectations."

"Ah, Miss Turton!" said he, looking as amusingly malicious as a young kitten. "We were just talking of you! It quite spoils you being in such rude health now, for there is nothing I admire so much as a graceful invalid; and it is a sad blunder to wear coloured flowers in your bouquet—they are reckoned quite vulgar now. They should all be pure white. I could not have supposed you making such a mistake."

"No one has a more off-hand way of saying unpleasant truths—if they are truths—than you, my Lord!" replied Miss Turton with a stage laugh, but looking excessively angry; while trying not to seem ashamed of her brilliant bouquet. "But I shall be very soon

beyond the reach of every earthly annoyance," and starting up soon after, she made her exit from the room with simpering affectation, tripping across the floor in a style which eclipsed all her previous performances, and might have petrified Cerito or Carlotta Grisi, while Lord Iona, with a most unamiable cough and satirical smile, directed Lady Anne's eyes to watch Miss Turton, looking more fit for a lunatic asylum than for a religious institution. "How well she would do in a tableau! Could we get up a few scenes? I am excellent in charades!"

"You, George, who are, as Byron said of such another rattled mortal, 'an ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow!' We could not trust you to be candle-snuffer, or you would snuff all the candles out!"

"What envy and detraction, cousin Anne! but those like me who stand upon a pedestal must expect to have stones thrown at them! *Apropos* of throwing stones: Father Eustace has been acting the political firebrand at Clanmarina, and worked up the Papists there into such a ferment of superstitious terror and excitement that our election will be riotous as an Irish fair. There are not stones enough on the road for the Protestant windows, and Father Eustace yesterday denounced Lady Edith from the pulpit."

Mr. Clinton had arrived before dinner, but he kept obviously aloof from that part of the room where Lady Edith sat, and seemed desirous to appear perfectly unconscious of her presence, while deeply engaged in conversation with Father Eustace. That wily priest, who knew his time for all things, and could be a perfect Proteus, stern or submissive on the shortest notice—firm as a rock, pliant as a willow—felt, or rather feigned such an interest in Mr. Clinton's opinions, looking into his spectacles with such an air of profound reverence, that the two remained in apparently endless discussions together, during which the cunning Father allowed Mr. Clinton, like an unpractised gamester, to gain every point at first in order to his losing all at last.

"Father Eustace is a man of supernatural intellect, yet he quite looks up to my husband for his extraordinary acquirements," whispered Mrs. Clinton, in a comfortable, self-satisfied tone, while Lady Edith fixed her deep-set eyes anxiously and kindly upon her. "You need not look alarmed, Lady Edith! It is the wildest notion that there can be any danger from that agreeable Jesuit. His arguments have not a feather's weight with either my husband or me! He has distinctly explained to me six times over the doctrine of Papal infallibility, without my ever understanding it one atom more clearly, or being in any danger of adopting it."

"Mr. Clinton has surely altered his style of dress lately, and there is a sort of stern solemnity in his manner quite strange to me; I cannot like the new cut of his coat or of his countenance," observed Lady Edith, quietly. "He was always abstemious, as all Christians ought to be; but how very rigidly he fasts now. Mrs.

Clinton, let my aged experience lift up its voice to you, even though you should consider me speaking mere old-womanisms. Before it be too late, let me implore you, as I do with tears, to discourage that intimacy."

"You are become quite an alarmist," said Mrs. Clinton, with a victorious air, "but never fear for my husband! He is really bringing over Father Eustace. Do you remember the unaccountable antipathy my husband and Father Eustace used to show against each other in society? How very different it is now!" said Mrs. Clinton, with an approving glance at her husband, whose appearance was as great a contrast as his nature to Father Eustace. Mr. Clinton's fair Saxon countenance, with clear, prominent, light eyes, wanted steadfastness of expression, while his quick, frank, voluble manner was strangely contrasted by the taciturn contemplative tone of the priest, so well adapted to the grave energy expressed in his dark, handsome, but very sensual-looking physiognomy. "Father Eustace has become such a friend to my husband!"

"Or rather such a flatterer!" observed Lady Edith, glancing at his look of profound respect for what Mr. Clinton was saying; "I scarcely recognise your husband now in the sort of Mediæval and architectural *dilettante* he has lately become, and in the kind of pre-Raphael-ite costume he now adopts."

"Yes! everything is changed except his spectacles," whispered Lord Iona to Beatrice. "He is always looking through them like the windows of an old post-chaise! I wonder if Mr. Clinton will be buried in spectacles!"

Every one in speaking to Lady Anne Darlington, or in talking of her, used some *nomme de caresse*, for she was the very idol of society. She was "Bijou" to her intimate friends, "Anne" to her mother, and "St. Cecilia" to Lord Iona. It seemed to Beatrice's fascinated partiality, that no eye should look at any one else when her new friend appeared, yet Lady Anne was not regularly beautiful, though beauty might hide its diminished head before the charm of her presence. Lady Anne's dress had almost a conventual character in its extreme simplicity, being of rich black velvet in the evening, and of black cloth in the morning, worn on both occasions up to the throat and down to the wrists, with white linen collar and cuffs. Her fair brown tresses were braided tightly round her small Grecian head, and her complexion was so dazzlingly white, without a tinge of colour on lip or cheek, that she looked to Beatrice like a beautiful corpse, or the ghost that might haunt an old abbey of some murdered nun. There was in all Lady Anne's movements a singular grace; her manner was natural as the wild-bird in a hedge; she had a spirit of enjoyment, where others would have found only weariness; her laugh was soft and musical; her clear ringing lark-like voice had an enchantment in every tone,—but who shall describe her singing? It was such music as Beatrice had

read of, or heard of, but it had an intensity of expression that she never could have conceived. She was entranced and amazed by the noble stream of harmony which swelled and sank upon her ear each time Lady Anne performed. While every sense this evening appeared wrapped in ecstasy, a low voice whispered close to her,—it was the voice of Lord Iona speaking to Lady Anne, in a tone of comic ecstasy, “There is not a finch in the grove whose notes you cannot imitate; a dying swan is nothing to you, Anne. You must feel here like a stray canary-bird among ordinary vulgar sparrows. What a pity that Sir Allan has not come down yet, to throw in his note and to enjoy yours as he used to do.”

The faintest tinge of pink stole into the cream-coloured cheek of the fair “Bijou,” who glanced uneasily towards Beatrice, and then bent her head over some sheets of music, and began warbling with most intense expression of unaffected feeling, a simple but very mournful hymn, while Father Eustace turned over the leaves and accompanied her. Beatrice, radiant with delighted admiration, glanced round the circle to share the pleasure of every listener, when her eye was caught by one countenance that startled and shocked her. Never in all her short experience of life had Beatrice seen on any face before an expression of such intense and helpless grief, as on the venerable countenance of Lady Stratharden, as she gazed from an obscure corner of the room at her daughter and Father Eustace. Lady Stratharden’s look was one of dignified sorrow, but so entirely heart-broken, that words would be inadequate to express any part of her grief. Large tears rolled slowly, heavily, and unheeded down her pale wasted cheek, and once a low sob that would not be suppressed, became sadly audible, as if wrung from her very heart, while unheeded tears gushed afresh from her aged eyes.

Nothing excites so much painful sympathy as the silence of intense grief, and Beatrice could not refrain from a stolen glance occasionally towards the afflicted mother, till at length when Father Eustace and Lady Anne commenced a hymn to the Virgin, Lady Stratharden, unable evidently to remain passive in the room, attempted to rise. Again and again she made an effort in vain, for she sank feebly back on the sofa, pale with agitation, which seemed every moment to increase. All were pre-occupied with the music, and none observed the grief-stricken mother but Beatrice, who quietly made a pretext of looking at some flowers for strolling towards that obscure corner where Lady Stratharden was seated, who instantly made her a sign for help, and in another minute they were arm in arm together, proceeding slowly to Lady Stratharden’s dressing-room. There, in a voice broken and low, the agitated mother tried to thank Beatrice for her timely aid, but her voice failed, and she threw herself on the sofa in an agony of convulsive grief which had no utterance but sobs of bitter anguish. A

stranger now did the offices of kindness which a daughter should have done, but sympathy was for ever at an end between the mother and child.

"Miss Farinelli," said Lady Stratharden, speaking with difficulty, "I find you can feel for me, and understand all my grief. Let your own heart be its best reward. It relieves me now to speak of one who used to be for ever beside me, and in every hope or feeling the same as myself. Oh! think of the change. By opposing what Father Eustace calls 'the vocation of my child for a convent,' I have incurred a curse expressed in his most fearful language. It does not of course weigh a feather with me, but it grieves my poor girl, still struggling with the old affection of her heart for the mother who loves her only too well. Anne has been in tears to-day, imploring me to let her have the anathema removed. Well may that fearful superstition be abhorred by God and man which speaks thus to a mother for trying to protect her own young daughter from imprisonment for life and from worse. Well may we say like David, 'Let me fall into the hands of God rather than of man.' The Popish Church has quite a genius for cursing, and here are the words written by Father Eustace in the name of his superstition to me; but they have no more influence than these hail-stones rattling on the window-pane."

Beatrice took the letter and read:—"Cursed may she be in her home, and out of her home; may she be cursed in the city and in the field, cursed in watching and cursed in sleeping, cursed in eating and drinking, cursed in walking and sitting; may her flesh and her bones be cursed, and from the sole of her foot to the crown of her head may she enjoy no health. May her name be erased from the book of the living, and not be recorded with the righteous!"

There was a very solemn silence in the room for several minutes, while Lady Stratharden, pale as a sheet, riveted her hands together and was evidently engaged in fervent prayer; but at length she said in accents of subdued feeling, "Who that ever had a Bible, could recognise in these words, the still small voice of peace on earth and good-will to man!"

"Surely the fierce un-Christian conduct of Father Eustace will startle your daughter's mind, and awaken her to a sense of duty and affection," said Beatrice earnestly. "She cannot have extinguished every remembrance of the past, every consciousness of her divinely appointed duty to you!"

"She seems in a magnetic dream now, quite incapable of any rational thought," observed Lady Stratharden meditatively, while grasping the arms of her chair, and breathing convulsively as if every respiration were a sob. "Till very recently I hoped that she and her cousin Iona might have made each other happy; but since my daughter has been so constantly practising sacred music with Father Eustace and Sir Allan, a young enthusiast like herself, she never seems to remember her cousin, and he thinks as little about

her. The young Baronet, I am told, has some entanglement in this country. I never could hear exactly who the lady is, but no matter now. My daughter and he have a mere musical intimacy and if she had married any one it would probably have been her cousin. Now all her bright prospects are soon to be exchanged for a flock-bed, a hair-shift, an open coffin, and an entire subjection of mind to some fellow-sinner, who calls himself her confessor."

"We may still hope and still pray, Lady Stratharden, while the irrevocable step is not finally taken," said Beatrice, in a tone of the kindest earnestness. "Though the influence of Father Eustace over all in this house seems without limit and without end, yet there is no extremity of human anguish on this side of eternity that should not send us the more earnestly and even hopefully to a listening God. What sorrow would so readily find His sympathy as that of a mother for her only child?"

"Such a daughter as yourself, Anne might have been to me, had not my own cousin and old friend Lady Eaglescarn betrayed me by recommending Miss Turton," said Lady Stratharden, clasping the hand of Beatrice, while her grief broke out anew. "I once had a prejudice against any mere honest English boarding-school for my precious Anne, fearing contamination from the indiscriminate companionship of other girls, but at the very worst boarding-school in Britain, no man is left alone for hours with a young pupil, secretly, to suggest any ideas of sin or impropriety he pleases. Father Eustace hears Anne's thoughts more confidentially than she ever entrusted them to me. Dreadful! how dreadful, none but her own mother can tell. I lately read over Anne's book of confession, and now I know the worst. The day she degrades herself to be a nun, she might as well drive over my body at once, for I could not survive the consciousness of her ruin. Miss Farinelli, every hour of your life thank God that you are a Protestant, that you belong to a faith which does not abhor every human affection and annihilate every relative duty."

As Beatrice was about slowly to leave the room, an idea which had been banished before recurred again to her mind, that possibly there might be more sense than nonsense in Lord Iona's gay rattling supposition, that some small spark of preference had arisen between Lady Anne and Sir Allen, which it were in the nature of things might be fanned into brighter existence, and as the generous mind of Beatrice meditated upon this one remaining hope, not a thought occurred to herself that the total extinction of Allan's early attachment should be a subject of regret. The meditations of Beatrice were interrupted by suddenly observing that the dark sinister eyes of Father Eustace were fixed upon her with a gaze of fierce and eager scrutiny, most startling and unaccountable, but the next moment he gathered up his features into a look totally destitute of expression, and his eyes remained immoveably cast down during the whole remaining night.

"If you please, Madam," said McRonald that evening, after receiving some orders from Lady Edith, "I cannot understand why wax-lights were burned in our chapel yesterday, while the sun dazzled my eyes. I like no changes," added the old man, ominously shaking his white head. "It always alarms me, if I am made to stand when I used to kneel in our service, or to kneel when I used to stand. Mr. Clinton is altogether getting very long in the candle now."

"The custom of lighting candles in the day-time," replied Lady Edith, "was begun when Christians had no church but the dark catacombs at Rome, where daylight never penetrated; but you are right, McRonald, to be watchful against one step in advance to Romanism. A seeming trifle, like a flag on the main-mast, often intimates a great deal."

CHAPTER XXIV

"Here easy quiet, a secure retreat,
A harmless life that knows not how to cheat;
With home-bred plenty, the wise owners bless,—
And rural pleasures crown their happiness."—*Dryden.*

LADY EDITH had retired late, and with restless grief and anxiety she thought of Allan, and even the greatness of her sorrow on his account did not so engross her, but she had still some solicitude to spare for Mr. Clinton, some sympathy for Lady Stratharden, and much pity for poor lost Bessie McRonald. Thus, like a tree cut down to the very ground, Lady Edith's own life was prostrated to the earth, yet in the hopes and prospects of others she found sources of interest such as her own could never more supply.

Towards morning, Lady Edith, hearing the deep-toned sound of a bell, rose to look out of the window, where she found a soothing pleasure for some time in observing many a light cloud careering swiftly across the hemisphere, which veiled from time to time the calm effulgence of the crescent moon and of the silent stars. How beautiful, in every aspect, are the varying pictures of cloud and sky! Masses of snow had fallen during the night, and were hanging on every branch of the old oak avenue, stretching nearly a mile long, and ending in a perspective like the roof and window of some vast cathedral. Every trunk and branch was white as marble, and every leaf on the evergreens beneath seemed as if carved in ivory. A few snow-flakes, like fairy-gems, sparkled as they fell, and the hoar-frost lay like a sheet of frosted silver over the extensive park and distant hills. The beautiful chapel was hung with long icicles, which glittered like drawn swords hanging from the roof, and also fringing the porch, under the shadow of which they were but dimly seen.

As Lady Edith stood admiring this glorious landscape, clearly shown by the silver lamp of night, suddenly the whole building, as if by magic, became lighted up inside, the fine gothic arches were brilliantly illuminated from the interior, and the reflection of the stained glass windows lay stretched, like a many-coloured rainbow on the snow beneath.

Lady Edith would have felt recompensed for the loss of a month's sleep, by witnessing the solemn glory of such a scene, where a million of stars above, and the ancient church beneath, filled her mind with thoughts of time stretching on to eternity. As she stood impressively but pleasingly meditating on that Divine Creator who had called herself and all these glorious objects into being, the loud sonorous bell suddenly tolled again for the service, and there issued forth from the castle a procession of figures advancing in the dim moonlight and along the untrodden snow towards the chapel. In the female group which advanced first, Lady Edith at once recognized the light and graceful form of Lady Anne, leaning on Miss Turton. Keeping at a respectful distance, Bessie followed, escorted by Father Eustace, who seemed talking very earnestly to her. Behind these, to the grief and consternation of Lady Edith, she unmistakably recognised in this Popish troop Mr. Clinton, walking slowly beside the tall, robust, and stately Mr. Ambrose, who supported on his other side the slight, stooping, feeble form of Sir Allan McAlpine, advancing with painful effort over the untrodden snow; and as he once looked back, for a moment, towards the Castle, his face, pale and spectral in the moonlight, looked to Lady Edith like the face of a spirit. Had she seen him stretched on his death-bed, the grief could not have been more profound of Lady Edith, the truest friend he had upon earth, at seeing the young chief thus enlisted by craft and cunning into a state of slavery, endless as time, and boundless as human nature.

At breakfast Sir Allan did not appear, and Mr. Ambrose, smiling significantly to the assembled party, made his nephew's perfectly authentic apology, "Quite knocked up with his journey!"

"Or rather with his midnight pilgrimage in the snow," whispered Lord Iona to Beatrice. "The less fit his health is for such efforts, the more meritorious do his spiritual advisers consider it that he should perpetrate a gradual suicide, by obeying all their supernatural requirements. Father Eustace says that those in earnest about another life must not expect to remain long in this world. The priest will take care, however, that Sir Allan lives till after his next birthday, when he comes of age and signs away his whole property."

"Is it true that he is to take the vow of poverty, and that in Sir Allan's deed of resignation he must not omit so much as a nail or a piece of twine, if he has any such trifles, besides his plate, jewels, books, and estates?" asked Beatrice, in a tone of almost desponding grief. "Poor Clanmarina! and all its honest, worthy, Protestant tenants!"

what am I to think and believe?" added he, mournfully contemplating one of his thin, emaciated, almost transparent hands. "Till we met yesterday, I scarcely realized how altered I am,—altered! yes! in mind as much as in body! Beatrice, you would not have known me again!"

"Allan, you are changed indeed, but no change could have so altered you that my sisterly affection could have been deceived," replied Beatrice, her pulse fluttering with a thousand conflicting emotions. "If your hair were white as snow, if your figure were bent to the ground, could I forget the companion of all my happy days?"

"But you did forget me, Beatrice!" said Sir Allan, in a low voice of mournful reproach. "Yes! before I allowed the link to be cut that bound my heart in the dearest of bonds to yours, they had told all—"

"Told you what, Allan?" exclaimed Beatrice, in accents of inexpressible astonishment. "There could be nothing to tell you about me!"

"Much, Beatrice, much; and you know it. Could you suppose me ungenerous enough to urge my previous claim? My uncle told me I should see all confirmed, by finding you domesticated in this house! Yes; you could not write it to me, and therefore you did not write at all."

"We did write, Allan! constantly—incessantly!" replied Beatrice, pale with astonishment at his reproachful accent, while he listened at first with a smile of hopeless incredulity. "Surely, Allan, you do not imagine there is a thought in my heart I need conceal from you! We were always to be friends,—brother-and-sister friends,—though duty forbade me to accept a deeper love from you than friendship. Lady Edith knows all—"

"Yes: they told me so!—they told me, Beatrice, that Lady Edith approved of your receiving Lord Iona's addresses, and nothing short of that could have brought about my finding you in a house, always hitherto so shunned and abhorred by this dear friend of us both. Yes; she has consented, as I was told,—she encourages it, as I was assured,—yes, Lady Edith; you disapprove of my attachment to Beatrice, because it might cast a reflection on the prudence of Sir Evan. Months ago I was told all, and then hope, as well as happiness, died with me."

"Allan, dear Allan! believe not a single word that any one has said, since you left Heatherbrae!" exclaimed Beatrice earnestly. "It was Lady Edith's deep love for yourself that brought us here,—the desire we both had to see you once again. I am unchanged in my resolution never to be yours, never to go anonymously into any family; but shall die as I live, grateful to all who will be the friend of one without relatives. Lord Iona is a mere amusing acquaintance who has never yet spoken a word of sense to me, or expressed a single feeling of any description, approaching even to friendship. If you had seen our letters to you—"

"Letters! Yes! I guess all now! My mother is beyond the reach of my reproaches, but she has betrayed me. I also wrote, Beatrice—often—very often—and longed, how anxiously! to hear from you both. It has been a gradual work, but oh, how sure!" continued Sir Allan, half speaking to himself, in quivering tones of anguish. "The world itself seems to have broken down beneath me! yet I dare not wish it undone! The ignorance of my childhood was bliss indeed, and so were its attachments. Aunt Edith, I have learned much since we parted, but I have forgotten how to be happy; yet still it is a comfort to be here with you, that I may look and speak as miserably as I feel. How difficult for me now, when I see you both, to wish for old times again, and old affections! My mind and heart are tossed in a tempest of perplexity. Happiness and I have become strangers for ever. My own uncle, Father Ambrose, with the best intentions, has made it so. There seems no rest for me but in the grave!"

With a look of dignified affection, the venerable Lady Edith placed her hand within the arm of Sir Allan, and led him to the window, where her eye became mournfully fixed on the distant battlements of Cairngorum Castle, its ancient towers proudly overhanging the lowly cottages of Clanmarina. A look of death-like sorrow was in her countenance as she gazed on the glorious scene, and Sir Allan, clasping his hands over his face with a gesture of almost frenzied grief, groaned in bitterness of spirit.

They stood side by side for several minutes in silence, during which Beatrice felt a dizzy rush of agitation, and her beautiful countenance became convulsed with emotion when the vision of past days arose to the mind's eye of all. Her whole frame shook as in the blast of winter, but she became still as in death, when Lady Edith, in low earnest accents which trembled with agitation, said, still clinging to the young Chief's arm, "You left us, Allan, heart-broken with grief for the brave and generous uncle who fell in your defence. You were kidnapped into the hands of a far different uncle, who has, not by fair means, but by very unscrupulous ones, perverted your inexperienced mind from the true faith of your pious ancestors, and you are come back labouring under a nightmare of superstition—bound heart and soul to undo all the good work that your best of friends, Sir Evan, did here."

"Never!" muttered Sir Allan, vehemently. "May the round world perish first!"

"It is death in life to become a Jesuit!" continued Lady Edith, fervently. "The Popish religion is not a refreshing gale from heaven, but a destructive whirlwind, which will sweep away every independent wish you can form! Yes! I know the worst. Mr. Talbot, alias Ambrose, practised a cheat on Sir Evan, and has performed the rest of his task with most fearful success. You are his blind but willing victim."

"In one thing let me set you right. My uncle, Father Ambrose

was till lately an enthusiastic Protestant! He assures me of that! At first he really regretted, beyond all measure, the effect produced on my mind by circumstances quite unforeseen—friends he inadvertently introduced to me—books he heedlessly left in my way—perplexities in his own mind on which he thoughtlessly consulted me!—these all brought convictions on my awakened conscience which he never anticipated. Had my tutor deceived Sir Evan as to his own creed, I should have despised and hated him, but he only deceived himself.”

“Of course!” replied Lady Edith, with a perfectly incredulous smile. “You are still as unsuspicious, Allan, as in your boyhood, when it was impossible to persuade you that any one deliberately did wrong! Mr. Ambrose, then, had not any hand in the perversion of your mother’s faith!”

“Believe me, none whatever! It would be undoubted injustice to suspect him on that score,” said Sir Allan, in a strange agitated voice. “He was quite heart-broken about the whole affair, though of course his church gains 2,000*l.* a-year by the conversion. It took Mr. Ambrose quite by surprise! For several days previously he was shut up during many anxious hours alone with my mother, trying to dissuade her”——

“Did you say to ‘dissuade,’ or was it not rather to persuade? Allan! dear Allan! you are too good and truthful for the deep-waters of Jesuitism,” said Lady Edith, with a sad dreary smile; “but there is a hole in that mill-stone, which any one but yourself would see through. Look beyond the surface”——

“I do! but how you mistake Mr. Ambrose! His attachment to me is unbounded, and mine to him!”

“I thought that among the Jesuits no special preferences were allowed, that the Priests annihilated the heart as well as the intellect, and that you Proselytes must never either unbend or unfold your minds—neither feel nor expect any peculiar attachments, except in respect to your confessor,” said Lady Edith, sadly. “You know sportsmen say that in coursing, if any greyhound becomes partial to one individual more than to another, he is no longer fit for his work; and the same idea is carried out among those to whom you, Allan, are about to be united. You must become like wax, to be moulded at their discretion, and as Madame Tussaud models her wax at will into a Jack Sheppard, an O’Connell, or a Mrs. Fry, you must be ready to take any part appointed in the programme of your superiors. Chalk must be cheese in your eyes, if you are desired to think it so; and the blackest crime, Allan, must be white in your conscience, if you are commanded to perpetrate it.”

The evident blindness of Sir Allan, in respect to the conduct and intentions of Father Ambrose his uncle, made Lady Edith fear that any check-string her feeble hand could apply to his Rome-ward progress, would be weak as a spider’s web; yet she prayerfully resolved to hope where all seemed hopeless, and continued in a

cents tremulous with emotion, "You would need two pair of eyes, and two pair of ears, to be sufficiently on your guard with those among whom you are now about to be enlisted! Is it not true, Allan, that when the general of the Jesuits desires one of his Proselytes to become degraded, or even criminal, the more your conscience might forbid the sacrifice of virtue, the greater becomes your merit in resisting your own convictions, and violating your own sense of right? Not only must you, if once a sworn victim, vow perpetual poverty, and give up every hallowed tie of earthly affection,—not only must you be ready falsely to assume the character of a Protestant servant or tutor, to act as spy in any confiding family that is to be deceived and betrayed,—but you must not shrink from crimes the most odious, if these will enrich an order of religious hypocrites, who are individually poorer than beggars, but are collectively richer than the mines of Golconda. Jesuitism is the most successful conspiracy of sinful man against the health, happiness, and liberty of every young victim to its withering influence. Your confessor has already ascertained all the assailable points in your mind;—well he knows now, by deep underhand observation, how to shift his sails and steer his helm, so that you shall be shipwrecked, and your uncle himself, like a true wrecker, gain every fragment of the ruined craft."

"Many an anxious thought I have had, many a feeling, and many a fear," muttered Sir Allan, meditatively. "I seem to have grown old beneath a burden of thought that no one could share! Solitary and bewildered at Rome, my perplexities of soul involved,—oh! what did they involve?"

"Allan, can you wonder if I feel as if the very spirit of Sir Evan himself might rise from the dead to warn you against the snares of Mr. Ambrose, to plead for the dear old place, for the home and the tenantry of your ancestors, for myself, your almost heart-broken old friend. It would stir up the smouldering ashes of my existence, if I could yet hope to see you snatched from this fearful gulf, and no longer cowering in slavish obedience before your priestly uncle. Cowper describes the captive chained in a lungeon, but whose mind could soar unfettered to the skies! It remained for Jesuitism to deprive man of his most glorious gift, freedom of thought and of prayer, to put out the eyes of the soul, and to leave you a mere breathing image, without will, responsibility, feeling, or conscience. Allan! in the name of Sir Evan, I implore you to pause, and may God himself protect you, for no power of man is able to cope with the falsehood and cunning that are employed for your destruction!"

There were tears in Sir Allan's eyes when the venerable Lady Edith held out her trembling hand to him; and the expression of his countenance had become more natural,—less pre-occupied, and less oppressed with a nameless horror, than it had been. He looked for a short moment himself again, but at this instant a slow heavy step was heard coming along the passage, which caused the whole

countenance of Sir Allan to change. It seemed as if a magical spell were upon him, for in a moment the dull, blank, musing look of wretchedness overclouded that handsome young face again; the words froze on his lips, and he seemed alarmed and uneasy. There was a knock at the door, and the grand authoritative bell of the chapel at the same moment sounded. Sir Allan rose to look out, and in an instant stood face to face with his uncle, the priest, who said, in a bland, smooth tone of courteous censure, though there was much suppressed excitement in his deep impressive voice, "I rightly guessed, my son, that your kind heart would bring you here, to visit our old friends and am happy also to pay my sincere respects to Lady Edith and Miss Farinelli." A bitter smile parted his thin compressed lips, as he added, "At the same time do not forget, Allan, that though you have been beguiled into an imprudence by coming here, we are under strict rules of punctuality. Dinner before prayers, and there is not now a moment to lose. Good morning, Lady Edith! Excuse this necessary interruption: health must be attended to, and our watch-word is obedience."

Lady Edith listened with a quiet stateliness of demeanour. Now for a moment the pride of manhood and of independence flashed proudly in the bright eyes of the young Chief, and his whole figure seemed to expand with a new dignity. He paused, as if about, with almost despairing resolution, to assert his own freedom; but Mr. Ambrose, whose eyes in general scarcely ever looked at anything, as if they were only placed in his head for ornament, not for use, now fixed them on Sir Allan with an intensity perfectly startling. Slowly then the light of intellect became quenched in the countenance of Sir Allan, his expression grew haggard, his cheek of an ashy hue, and, with one farewell look of speechless anguish at Lady Edith and Beatrice, ashamed to yield, yet unable to resist, he slowly, and evidently with great unwillingness, disappeared.

Lady Edith, shivering with agitation, exchanged a look of unutterable sorrow with Beatrice, who, pale as ashes, felt it a grief under which to wither and grow old, when she thought that never more was she to listen, probably, to all the hundred things she had hoped to hear from Allan, and that all she had to tell him must remain for ever unsaid; but her thoughts were in a moment transferred to her kind-hearted and aged benefactress, who sunk upon the sofa, exhausted with agitation, and burst into an agony of tears, saying, "Anything else I could have borne better, but to see all the noble works that Sir Evan lived to accomplish, destroyed by his own beloved Allan,—to see Allan cheated of his all, enslaved and degraded,—why have I survived to witness that! Yet let me not question the wisdom and mercy of all that is ordained. I am crossing the last arch in the mysterious bridge of life, and possibly there is yet something left for me to do, that may cheer my latest breath with the consciousness of having not lived my last hours in vain."

Beatrice struggled for composure, but large tears drenched her long dark eyelashes as they drooped on her pallid cheek, and she thought, "How true is that ancient saying, 'The crowning sorrow of sorrow is the remembrance of happiness for ever departed!' Even if those feelings were a deception, would that we might all dream them over again! But the past has vanished like a shadow in the stream;—like a flashing meteor, that leaves us all darker than before it shone."

Beatrice conscientiously believed herself not at all in danger of becoming attached to Lord Iona, yet she caught herself constantly, incessantly, and invariably thinking of him, and certainly rather more interested in the reflection of her own mirror than formerly. There was a gay light-heartedness in his manner, extremely attractive from the very first, but on more intimate acquaintance she discovered, that beneath a surface of strange wayward originality, and odd whimsical thoughts, there lay a mine hitherto deeply hid and unsuspected, of solid thought, genuine and sterling as Californian gold.

"Iona!" said Lady Anne, one day, in a complaining tone, "I might as well attempt to argue with a whirlwind as with you! The great secret of success on all occasions is, to take people by surprise—and you always do, Mr. Cousin. We must put a drag on the wheels of your chariot, to make you keep pace with other people."

"Yes! as drivers break in a too spirited horse by yoking it into a London omnibus," replied Lord Iona, assuming a tone of good-humoured conceit. "People all live and think at railway speed, Anne, while nothing makes any permanent impression on anybody. It is like the way we look at a landscape in travelling now, when you can scarcely tell a tree from a house, or a horse from a donkey, and it does not matter for the passing moment which they are; but, long ago, every object was deliberately viewed in every light, and remembered for ever."

"Suppose we all make an old-fashioned tour this summer on horseback, to admire the country at our leisure? You shall ride Plantagenet, and carry me on a pillion behind to point out what you should admire."

"In that case I must have eyes at the back of my head, Anne, to see what I should of course admire most! I shall be quite ready to go on the thirteenth month of this year."

"Or, suppose we fix it for the fifty-third week?—and in case any one else asks me, I shall now label myself, like the railway-carriages—'Pre-engaged.'"

"Not to me, Anne! We know each other too well; for, as the poet says, how soon you'll 'shift the merry toy-shop of your heart!' Our meetings are always pleasant to me, as a breeze that has passed over a garden of roses, but I never expect the said breeze to settle itself with me for life!"

"You know, Iona, that water requires to be kept incessantly agi-

tated to preserve it from stagnating, and my mind really needs the effervescing powder of variety and amusement," said Lady Anne. "Who would have dreamed, long ago, that either Sir Allan or I would have plunged into monastic life? but I am always in extremes. How happy and cheerful he and I used to be at Rome together!"

"And how happy you might be yet!" answered Lord Iona, in a tone of heartfelt kindness; but Lady Anne sighed heavily, and turned away—her face pale, and her eyes filled with sudden tears, as she gazed at Beatrice, who was speaking at the moment to the young Chief, Allan looking now, in his Highland dress, quite himself again, in all the dignity of free and intellectual manhood.

CHAPTER XXV.

"But flowers of amaranth spring not in the shade,
And faith, hope, charity, are vain parade
In him whose sour abstraction to the cell
Of malcontent misanthropy retires,
Forgetting and forgotten, there to dwell,
Cumbering the ground."—HOYLE.

LADY EDITH was seated one day on a camp-stool in the glen enjoying a bright gleam of sunshine, and listening delightedly to the loud roar of the cataract, when she suddenly observed two figures strolling along a shady lane towards the little rocky recess in which she had sat down to rest. Their heads were both down, and the conversation appeared so deep and earnest, that they were evidently unconscious of all surrounding objects, so anxiously did they listen to each other.

The tall figure of a man in black, standing occasionally still, in the vehemence of animated discussion, while he demonstrated gracefully with his arms, might have formed an admirable accident to any artist studying the picturesque in that beautiful landscape; and beside him was a slight girlish form, enveloped in black and white draperies of a conventual aspect, and almost crouching with apprehensive timidity of look and attitude, as she slowly as well as very feebly moved along. Her step was almost tottering, her head drooping, and her hands folded with an air of hopeless, heartless dejection; but still the girl's attention seemed in a state of fascination so intense, that Lady Edith could have touched her without disturbing the dream-like absorption of her thoughts as they approached.

It did not long remain a mystery to Lady Edith who these were. From the second glance she recognised the tall portly figure of Father Eustace, which could not be mistaken, though his usually solemn countenance had in it now a sentimental expression not very usual, while he spoke in accents less grave and stern than common

But who was the companion of Father Eustace? Never in all her long experience of life had Lady Edith seen any young face so utterly mournful. Never!—Yes! it was all that remained of Bessie McDonald!

An unbidden tear sprang into the eye of Lady Edith as she gazed at this strangely deluded girl, apparently sinking into the grave, a voluntary victim to the saddest delusions that ever robbed mankind of their senses and happiness. Bessie's dejected steps had carried her nearly past the retired nook in which Lady Edith sat, when she accidentally looked up, and with a sudden cry of almost agonized recognition, was about to rush forward and clasp the hand of her former benefactress, but a look from the powerful eye of Father Eustace stopped her, as if she had been paralysed, and she shrunk back to his side like a bird under the fascination of a serpent. Lady Edith gave Bessie a kind smile of encouragement, but she ventured to do no more in return than to make a respectful curtsy, and pass mournfully on. Father Eustace then in a low voice said to her, while assuming now a tone of stern authority, "You have not yet sufficiently crushed down those sinful attachments which should hereafter be considered odious, when felt towards an obstinate heretic such as Lady Edith. The sorrow, too, that you still cherish, and were describing to me now, respecting Robert Carre, is wrong and unavailing. Mingling as that young man does in scenes of worldly occupation, he will soon console himself with some new object of affection."

"Never! No, Bessie, never!" exclaimed a voice close to the speaker, and in a moment Robert Carre had bounded over a hedge, sprung across a ditch, and approaching with rapid strides stood before the startled girl, his dark eyes flashing with excitement, and his lip quivering with emotion. "Never did man give to woman a deeper or more lasting love than mine for you, Bessie. You were the first to possess my affections!—they are now like the leaves of autumn, wafted in withered desolation before the blast, but never more to take root for any other, or to live in this world again. I mourn for you now as dead, and as dead I forgive you, too."

Lady Edith had scarcely believed it possible for a human countenance to express so much sorrowful and solemn emotion; but when he turned to the Jesuit, Robert's eyes shot fire, his lips became compressed as if the very blood would spring from them, and there was a stern determination in his finely formed countenance, before which a bolder man than Father Eustace might have quailed, as he evidently did.

"Fear nothing, Mr. Eustace," said Robert in a tone of heart-broken contempt, "vengeance is not for man, and least of all for a Protestant Christian. You are perfectly safe from me; yet, the day must come when every husband and father in Britain will banish such as you from his house, and may I live to see it!"

"Bessie!" added he, turning slowly round to the trembling girl

and his voice changed to a tone of the tenderest pity, "that bad man has succeeded, and we are parted for ever and ever; but our love has been the loadstone of my existence. The widest sea on earth is nothing compared to the gulf that separates me now from you; I would have crossed deserts or oceans to prove my affection; but not one inch of the ground that divides our immortal souls. There is no hope for me now, and not even the remotest wish left that we should ever be united."

Robert paused a moment in solemn thought; and then continued, in a low, impressive voice,—“Bessie! listen to one whose broken heart shall beat for you while it beats at all. Do not irrevocably pledge yourself to be under any man’s guidance, instead of God’s. There is only one instance in Holy Scripture of man’s confessing to man: that instance was Judas, when he confessed to the Jews; and little did that confession avail him, either with God or man. May you return one day, Bessie, to the simple faith of your Bible; and though I shall then be far away, yet, even at the farthest end of the earth, it will gladden my heart to hear that the bird has escaped from the snare. Farewell, Bessie!—a long, long, long farewell!”

Robert remained for several moments silently gazing at Bessie, more in pity than in anger or sorrow; while the colour burned like fire on her cheeks, and it would evidently have been a relief if the earth had kindly opened and swallowed her up. He then turned towards the priest. Father Eustace stood immovable in attitude as in countenance, his long coat almost touching the ground, like a black petticoat, and his hat slouched over his eyes, which were now, as usual, carefully veiled from observation, by the dropping of his eyelids. Lady Edith thought she had never seen so singular a contrast. The clear eye, the open brow, the attitude of native dignity, the frank expression of Robert Carre, and the free action of his finely-formed limbs, beside Father Eustace, who stood in the position of a perpendicular corpse, his eyes closed, his mouth pursed in, his hands folded together, his feet ranged side by side, and his whole figure crouching with assumed humility.

For a moment Robert Carre seemed about to address him, and fixed on Father Eustace a look that seemed to read his very soul; but he suddenly paused, and, with a glance of stern contempt that might have done for ten emperors, turned away. He then respectfully lifted his hat to Lady Edith, gave one last look at Bessie, who was leaning her forehead against a tree, and, springing over the hedge, disappeared into the forest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"L'honnête homme est celui qui ne vole pas sur les grands chemins, et qui ne tue personne."—LA BRUYERE.

"What signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like ours? Taxes rising and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time no less than an hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing Cross and Temple-bar.—GOLDSMITH'S *Good-natured Man*.

PREPARATORY to the impending contested election, the village of Clanmarina was covered with placards, setting forth, in tremendous type, the once honoured name of "McAlpine for ever." These placards were torn down every day, and every day renewed. It was quite the golden age of Clanmarina now; while the agent, Mr. Gordon, seemed to have become a perfect political Cræsus, ready to buy any body, or any thing, at any price. It was indeed a sight now to behold Lord and Lady Eaglescairn, when they first began their unpractised attempts to "do a little popularity." Always ambitious to be the ruling family of Clanmarina, though not liking the arts of popularity nor its expenses, they now threw aside every hindrance to success, while evidently enjoying, with all the excitement of a horse-race, the dash and bustle, the manœuvring, the pushing, the conquering of difficulties, the incessant arrivals and departures, the discussions over the dinner table, the driving, the riding, the sauntering, the galloping, and the whole complicated game of politics. They seemed to have passed an act of oblivion and indemnity respecting all differences in religion as well as in politics, while inviting, with almost frantic hospitality, every voter, and every relation of a voter, to dine and to vote with them.

"McAlpine and Cheap Bread!"—"McAlpine and Independence!" read Robert Carre, one day, as he walked through the village. "Give us, 'McAlpine and Protestantism!'"—that would gain every vote in the district! What independence could there ever be under priestly tyranny?"

It was evidently a very forced interest that Sir Allan took in his own canvas; and Lady Edith, who knew by heart every intonation of his voice, every turn of his countenance, plainly perceived how unwilling a tool her beloved Allan was in the strong grasp of those from whom he had not strength of mind to disentangle himself. The baleful eye of Mr. Ambrose seemed to possess a mesmeric power over his young nephew, and was fastened for ever upon him, especially when in the presence of Lady Edith, the revival of whose influence he evidently apprehended; and as he generally kept Sir Allan aloof from all intercourse with her or Beatrice, they were surprised one morning to see Mr. Ambrose pass his arm within that

of Sir Allan, and after a short, but earnest consultation, lead him up to where, in a state of voteless insignificance, they sat, with an evident desire of entering into conversation. It was obvious that Sir Allan accompanied his uncle most unwillingly; and Lady Edith did not wonder, after she had ascertained the purport of his unexpected advance; for while the young Chief's countenance became scarlet with emotion, even Mr. Ambrose looked a little abashed in opening a negotiation with Lady Edith, by saying in his most insinuating tone—

"I find, Lady Edith, I find that the extent of your long-trying and unalterable affection for my nephew is now to be most efficiently proved. I am sure he may reckon upon your utmost influence to benefit him; and during our canvass to-day I discovered that his election must be won or lost according as three of the electors vote—old Carre, of Daisybank, and his two sons, over whom you are believed to have the very greatest, the most unbounded influence."

There was a pause of several minutes before Lady Edith could reply, which she did in a low tone of concentrated emotion, yet of the gentlest earnestness. "What is there on earth that I would not do really to benefit Allan McAlpine? From his childhood till now not a day has elapsed without my praying that in all things he might prosper; but little did I dream that the hour should come when I could not even wish him success,—when it should become my duty to counteract as much as possible his wishes, and almost to seem like an adversary. In the coming election he appears not to me as the much-honoured Chief of his noble clan, but only as the nominee of Lord Eaglescairn. You, Allan!" added Lady Edith, addressing her young favourite in a tone of mournful incredulity, "Sir Allan McAlpine of Clanmarina, carrying the Popish banner of Eaglescairn! Think what such a sight must be to the old hereditary adherents of your family, to the old friends of Sir Evan, to friends such as myself and Mr. Clinton."

"You are quite mistaken as to Mr. Clinton," replied Mr. Ambrose, in a dry, measured voice, and with scarcely subdued triumph. "He promises to do nothing against my nephew. In fact, his generous friendship has not failed us in the hour of need, like some others, who say much and do little."

"You cannot mean that Mr. Clinton will avowedly support your candidate, Mr. Ambrose, even though he be Sir Allan McAlpine?" asked Lady Edith, with astonished dismay. "A Protestant clergyman cannot surely sanction any candidate possessing Jesuit views:—observe, Allan, that I cannot call them principles. Does Mr. Clinton promise you his actual support?"

"Not openly," replied Sir Allan, frankly, "but he engages not to oppose me, unless I make any distinct declaration against what he calls 'that branch of the Church established in this country.'"

"Such jargon is perfectly clear to me, Allan! Your intentions might be distinct enough to Mr. Clinton, were he not afflicted with

the deafness of one who does not wish to hear. Believe me, Allan, nothing can estrange my long-cherished attachment to yourself personally. If you became Superior of the Jesuits yourself, that could not blot out the memory of past years, unless it broke my heart entirely. Yet, my dear Allan, the times are not yet gone by, when Christians, rather than yield one principle of Protestant truth, would suffer that martyrdom of the heart which is ten thousand times worse than that of the body. I could much rather sacrifice this right hand than thus speak to you as my conscience bids me now. Since I must, then, choose between my love to God or man, Allan, that forces me to use any little influence I have against your having a vote in the councils of this great nation."

"Console yourself if I gain, Aunt Edith, that I shall never be a very leading member," said Allan, sadly smiling; "my Catholic duty obliges me to act by the decision of those who consult no individual wishes,—not even individual duties,—but only the interests of their own Church. I have neither wit, eloquence, humour, nor assurance enough ever to become a popular speaker."

"Nor independence, Allan. Any one chained like a galley-slave to the oar of Jesuitism has parted with the noblest incentive to exertion; that freedom of thought and of action which gives energy and dignity to every Protestant Christian."

Lady Edith's mild eye was fixed on the countenance of Allan with an expression deeply sad and thoughtful, while he listened with a look of polite impatience, and of most evident pain; his colour deepened to scarlet, and his embarrassment every moment increased; for the strange, glittering eye of Mr. Ambrose was fastened upon him with an unwinking intensity perfectly startling. The commanding power of such a look few could resist, and of those few Sir Allan was not one. His own eye sunk beneath its irresistible influence, as he gathered himself up and slowly withdrew; but when Sir Allan's groom appeared at the door, bringing round "Skirt-the-Moon," a fine, spirited led horse, the young Chief, with some of his old energy, sprang upon the noble animal's back, and dug the spur into his sides with heedless irritation. It reared and plunged furiously, but finding a rider so bold and skilful was not to be unseated, Skirt-the-Moon sprang forward at a gallop, while Sir Allan, enlivened by the conflict, raised his hat to Lady Edith, with a smile of melancholy affection, and rapidly vanished. Mr. Ambrose angrily muttered to himself that he hated to see his nephew with that heavy-cavalry manner, while Lady Edith then turned slowly away, sadly musing on the change of times since Sir Evan used to be a hereditary bulwark of the throne, and the hereditary opponent of that foreign faith which would supplant the royal authority in all things.

Beatrice, meanwhile, had taken advantage of being so near Cairngorum Castle, to stroll in that direction, and, always unwilling to make Lady Edith melancholy, she availed herself of this opportu-

nity to go alone. As she advanced towards the old towers and battlements, Beatrice gazed with emotions of solemn regret at the dismal dust-covered ivy, at the long approach overgrown with weeds, at the carriage-track covered with grass, at the door-step green with moss, at the shutters closed, at the chimneys without smoke, at the whole desolate aspect of a beloved home, once adorned with so much care, and ringing with every sound of earthly joy. Sir Evan's voice seemed in her ear, of friendly welcome to those who entered, of glad companionship to contemporaries, of ready benevolence to the needy, of indulgent affection to herself and Allan.

Through a small window opening into the hall, Beatrice looked earnestly in at the once familiar objects there, now sad memorials of what had been happiness. Sir Evan's own gun lay on the white marble table, unmoved since the day of his death, and the Highland bonnet he usually wore was beside it. Allan's fishing-rod stood before the nearest chair, and her own old garden bonnet was yet suspended on a peg where she had hastily hung it when she returned home on that fatal morning.

Every inanimate object was unaltered, but in whatever had belonged to life there was now the ghastly aspect of death, or sorrow, or absence. When Beatrice had wandered towards "the old fairy mount," she sat down beneath "the haunted cedar," once the scene of all her frolics with Allan; while now its moaning branches, as they creaked and groaned in the winter blast, seemed alone to preserve the voice of other days. That sound which had formerly saddened her joyous childhood seemed now in melancholy unison with the mournful changes already made by time, and the still worse changes to be made hereafter as the fruits of a delusive superstition.

Beatrice was buried in a painful reverie, meditating on the change in her old and still much-loved companion, who had said in her hearing that day to Mr. Ambrose, when asked to accompany his uncle there, that he could not yet face a visit to his home, and that if ever he mustered courage to go, it must be alone. She could not wonder that on such an occasion he avoided the companionship of his tutor-uncle, and she was idly conjecturing whether Sir Allan never felt sufficient freedom of thought to ask himself if he had not been unfairly tricked into his present strange position, when a light step attracted the attention of Beatrice, a dark shadow appeared on the grass; she started, turned round, and gasped as if for life itself when she found herself face to face with Sir Allan.

"Beatrice! dear Beatrice!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand before she had in the slightest degree recovered her astonishment. "If this world could afford me a pleasure, it is that you and I should once more stand on this spot together, as we promised each other, beneath the shadow of our own old haunted cedar. Is not the remembrance of our past lives here, like that of a long sunny day sadly recalled to memory after the darkness of night has closed in?"

"Yes, Allan! that aged tree is the only remaining witness here

of all our former happiness," replied Beatrice in low tremulous accents, while tears stood in her lovely eyes, and a scarlet flush rose suddenly to her cheek. "This place is haunted indeed by many an old remembrance. Dear,—oh! how very dear, to us both! Once more, then, we meet here as friends!"

"Friends, Beatrice! much more than friends!" exclaimed Allan, in hurried accents of strong emotion. "It must and shall be a far dearer tie that is to unite us."

"Impossible, Allan! oh, how impossible!" exclaimed Beatrice, while tears flowed down her face. "Consider me dead in so far as any such engagement is concerned. I cannot esteem and scarcely could love one so strangely perverted as to become an apostate to our faith. Allan! are we not aliens now on the only earthly subject of real importance? and could we ever enter on that sacred engagement which ought to unite people for both worlds? Even the brother-and-sister confidence and affection from which I hoped to derive most of my future happiness in life, can scarcely now continue!"

"Beatrice!" exclaimed Sir Allan, in accents of reproachful astonishment; "with you, I learned the first rudiments of happiness and love. Can you, then, look around on the scenes of our childhood and not wish that, as we were friends from the first, we should remain so to the last? How could you for a moment dream of forgetting our early affection, and of discarding me at once like an old hat or a torn parasol?"

"Allan," replied Beatrice in low accents that trembled with emotion, "it withers up my heart to say so; but you know as I do, that we can never, never be to each other what we once were. You were the first to forget,—for have you not forgotten those principles which it was formerly our greatest happiness to share? It seems a less agony at once to break off our mutual confidence, rather than to endanger my own mind by holding any confidential intercourse with yours; for you must remember how in old times you always led and I always followed. That must not be now! Mine is a simple, undoubting, Bible faith, such as any old woman in a cottage might attain to. It will last me through life and support me in death; but I dare not hereafter enter into controversy. Allan, dear Allan! my first and only companion, I can but pray for you."

Beatrice covered her face with both her hands, and sobbed with uncontrollable grief, while Sir Allan, pale as a spectre, fixed and pallid as stone, stood by her side, and evidently struggled as if throwing off a spell. His eyes lost their glazed unnatural look, and his mind appeared restored from the dreamy abstraction of a habitual trance. Still Beatrice continued to speak, her own eyes closed; for she felt unable to look Allan in the face without betraying the depth of her emotion:—

"Very sorrowful indeed has been the ordeal to my feelings, Allan, before I could allow myself to be convinced that you must

scarcely be even a brother to me. I have prayed and wept for you, Allan, and while the breath of life remains shall I not do so still? But, with all my old sisterly affection for you, and much of my old respect, I dare not trust myself even to speak on the sacred subjects of our faith. Without some sympathy in these there can be no friendship. It is not that I distrust the strength of the good Protestant cause, but I do greatly distrust my own ability to maintain it against you. The staff is strong, though the hand that would wield it be feeble and incompetent."

After a short pause of sorrowful reflection, Beatrice added slowly calmly, and very deliberately, "From this hour, Allan, I finally and for ever resign all claim on your attachment, such as it was on that never forgotten day when we met here, long, long ago. I do not speak under any excitement. Grateful as I am for your generous attachment, it has always been my wish that you should remain free as the winter breeze around us now,—and you are. I sat down yesterday to write you a farewell letter, Allan, but the pen so trembled in my hand that it would not obey me."

Beatrice turned away, her face drenched in tears, and was hurriedly departing, when Sir Allan imperatively stopped her, saying, evidently under an irresistible impulse of the very strongest emotion, which rendered his words almost inaudible,—“We must not part, Beatrice! You—you only could give a new tone to the broken strings of my mind and heart. This world without you would be one wide unlimited blank, for yours is the name that in death will be found engraved on my heart. The flame has smouldered on, it can never be extinguished. Let its light then remain to preserve me from final desolation? Do not thus break the only tie that can yet bind me to life. Nothing holds me back from becoming a Jesuit Priest but my deep, unquenchable love for you. You must act like a conductor to lightning, and lead me aright. In that hour when I learn to despair of your affection, I shall be driven on to take the plunge from which there is no return."

"Allan, think no more of me: there is another far more suited to make you happy than I," said Beatrice, in a tone of earnest kindness. "There would be no disparity of birth, no difference of sentiment, if you could but form a mutual attachment with that accomplished and most fascinating Lady Anne. Forget me from this day, and consider what a home you might have with her!"

"Impossible! oh, how impossible! Lady Anne attracts, but she does not attach me, Beatrice; you only can bring me back to life and its enjoyments," said Sir Allan with tremulous ardour. "For you and with you I might yet attempt to be happy."

"Allan," said Beatrice, firmly, but most sorrowfully, "once I loved you, it matters not now how deeply and truly. I believed you unfaithful to your first affection and to your religious principles, and I taught myself to consider that you had become a stranger to both. We are aliens in religion, and I dare not let my old attach-

ment revive. Your influence over me, always great, might become irresistible. Take, then, my farewell sisterly advice: I see and believe that Lady Anne is already partial to you. I can scarcely be mistaken in saying so. Would that the partiality were reciprocal! For myself, Allan, you never, never can be more to me than you are now. All the roses that surrounded us in childhood are turned to thorns; but come what may, your name shall be ever dear to me. It shall be the last uttered in my latest earthly prayers."

Beatrice, overwhelmed by her feelings, turned and almost fled home, leaving Sir Allan plunged in a deep, intense, and most mournful reverie. He gave a long earnest gaze around him, like the farewell look with which a man at the point of death might have bid adieu to this world, and with an aspect lost and woe-begone beyond all expression, he turned away, while every tree around seemed to groan in the blast, and heavy clouds gathered over the noble towers of Cairngorum Castle. Few things in life cause an interest so startling and exciting, as to stand among the unaltered scenes of our own childhood when feeling that all is changed within. It seemed to Allan now but a very few short hours since, in his animated boyhood, he had stood there beside Beatrice, both in the zenith of youthful happiness; and since then, while her countenance had matured into an expression of thoughtful, bright intelligence, his own, bronzed by an Italian sun—and still it must be allowed handsomer than any other—was wasted with care, haggard with sleepless nights of anxious thought, and prematurely aged with strange austerities, that now in a lucid interval he almost blushed to think of.

Beatrice, on her return home, was surprised to find on her toilette a letter, crumpled and ill-folded as if put up in great haste, and directed to her in a youthful, almost childish hand. Truly, it was a wild-looking, hieroglyphical scrawl, almost as illegible as an arrow-headed inscription. She tore open the uncouth-looking seal, and discovered, with surprise, a few hurried lines from Bessie McDonald. They were incoherently and strangely expressed, with a fervour of love and gratitude to herself which appeared to be the outpouring of a broken heart as well as of a clouded understanding. Death itself seemed her only remaining wish, and the sooner the better. "I am utterly—utterly wretched," she wrote in pages slurred and blotted in tears. "I have no one to advise or sympathise with me but Father Eustace, and I begin to doubt whether he is a safe and friendly counsellor. Have I sinned in telling you this? in asking for your sympathy, when before this miserable letter reaches you I shall be beyond the reach of help? I have discovered circumstances relating to you, that gratitude made me wish to tell, but Father Eustace has sworn me to secrecy, yet in case of my betraying them, I am to be shut up in a distant convent, where no mortal can communicate with me, and where all my letters will be examined. I have not a moment in which to tell you all

now, or I would. Farewell, Miss Farinelli—a long, long farewell! Oh, if I have sacrificed all my earthly happiness, and am yet mistaken! Nothing was wanted to make me utterly wretched, but a doubt whether I did right in leaving home, and now that doubt has come. At this moment there is a vision before my eyes of what might have been my happy lot—the lovely garden of Daisy-bank, the cheerful fire-side, the daily prayers, the honoured Bible, the long attached husband, and his kind old father, whom I might have been assisting Robert to nurse! I have been all night in chapel, prostrate on the stone floor, in the form of a cross, repeating my Ave Marias three hundred times, and I thought the image of St. Bridget stretched its arms toward me at last and smiled; yet strange to say I am not consoled. I dread, above all, the sight of Father Eustace. Must I confess to him this letter? Alas, no! There are home feelings that cannot be uttered even to him; and oh, Miss Farinelli, should you see Robert Carre, tell him that there is no sorrow he has ever endured at our being parted that is not multiplied ten thousand times over in my wretched heart. I was supported long by the belief that my advisers were all infallibly right, that my merits were to save myself and Robert—you and all who love me, if I revenged my sins on myself by penances; but circumstances make me doubt Father Eustace now, and yet I am in the meshes of a net from which there is no escape. He comes! Farewell for ever.”

“There shall be an escape for Bessie,” muttered Robert between his teeth, which he ground together with an energy that seemed almost insane, after Beatrice had showed him this letter, full of such inexpressible anguish. “Bessie may never now be mine; there is a soul-dividing barrier between us; but I forgive her all the misery she has caused me, and if the power of man can find out where she is shut up and deliver her from imprisonment, it shall be done. If there be a law on earth that can reach within the walls of a convent, I shall trace out the den into which she has been decoyed, and in defiance of all human or inhuman efforts to the contrary, release her.”

“It is a very generous intention, Robert,” said Beatrice kindly; “but be very wary what you say or do when Father Eustace comes in question. He is of a species not yet understood in this country; but if there were a showman qualified to exhibit him in his den, you would hear of habits, feelings, and opinions which it would require the moral courage of a Van Amburgh to defy.”

“But I do defy him,” said Robert, in a low deep voice of concentrated emotion. “Honest straightforward Protestantism may be no match for Popish intrigues and falsehood, backed by superstition and conventual prisons, yet I can but try, and let life itself be the sacrifice rather than I should be a coward.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Oh happiness, our being's end and aim !
Good, pleasure, ease, content, whate'er thy name—
That something still which prompts the eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die."—YOUNG.

It is remarkable how long men may dwell under the same roof with others, and sit at the same table, yet remain alike unknowing and unknown. A veil had fallen from the eyes of Beatrice, and she discovered how completely long absence, long silence, and the consciousness that they were divided in faith and in feeling, had restored her sentiments for Allan to the brother-and-sister terms of their early days ; but she had not come to the secret of Lord Iona's long-cherished preference, nor to a suspicion that she herself returned it.

Beatrice wandered next day thoughtfully along the river's side gazing at the azure sky, and forming a thousand imaginary images in the drifting clouds, while she sung in a low musing tone the beautiful air of "Bendemere Stream." Occasionally with a feeling of girlish enjoyment she threw a leaf upon the tide as emblematic of some wish, and idly watched in its progress for an omen whether success or failure should be the result ; or she dropped the bright pebbles to observe their descent in the crystal flood ; when most unexpectedly a voice close behind her took up the tune she sung, and made it a duet. Beatrice started, and looking as timidly round as a frightened hare, felt a blush mount to her cheek on observing Lord Iona, fishing-rod in hand, trailing it rapidly along that he might overtake her ; and as soon as he was quite within conversable distance he said, "You seem just in the sort of idle humour that I am myself, Miss Farinelli, when even a man and monkey with a hurdy-gurdy would be a resource ; so let me do my best to divert your ennui."

"Perhaps I have no ennui to be diverted," said Beatrice smiling archly, while the delicate pink on her cheek became a bright carnation. "You are a true quack doctor, pretending to have discovered a complaint that does not exist, and then offering to cure it."

"Well, then, I shall be a perfect gad-fly, to persecute and torment you for the rest of our walk ; but pray do not play upon my feelings as if they were the notes of your own pianoforte, as they are much out of tune at present, Miss Farinelli. Now tell me whether, if you could look into the depths of my heart as clearly as into that pool, you would do so. No stone could be found at the bottom there."

"No, nor an iron will on the surface, though I remember somebody once saying that he had one," replied Beatrice with a look of

merry malice. "You really seem, like this gay stream, to run on through life with sunshine sparkling at the top and shining even to its deepest depths."

"You think me shallow. You think I have no more in me than my mother's educated bullfinches and learned mice. I see that in your eye. It is very ungrateful, when I have such an opinion of your depth that I verily believe you could stand a 'little-g's' examination at Oxford."

"Thank you. Since nothing is reckoned so odious by gentlemen as a blue-stocking, I may guess now pretty accurately what position I hold in your estimation. Perhaps, like Portia in the Merchant of Venice, I may yet put on a doctor's gown, or, like Othello, address you as a 'Potent, grave, and reverend signor.'"

"Wait till I am one," answered Lord Iona, hurriedly snatching up a sprig of laurustinus, which Beatrice had cast upon the stream. and placing it in his button-hole. "By this badge I appoint myself your knight for the day."

"For one day, that day being more than half over, you may safely encounter all the dangers, difficulties, and fatigues," replied Beatrice, trying still to preserve the usual bantering tone of their conversation; but she was surprised and somewhat startled at the increasing agitation observable in Lord Iona's tone and manner. "How I should like on some fine day to see a tournament!"

"And to be yourself the Queen of Beauty, with me for your true knight? I could die for you any day. We all come into the world, you know, to search for the other half of ourselves, and are never happy till it is found. Have I not at last discovered mine? At least I shall never look for any other."

There was less of jest than of earnest in the tone with which Lord Iona spoke these words, and seeing Beatrice start and colour with astonishment, he added in tones of unaffected sincerity, "You cannot be surprised, Miss Farinelli, even though perhaps annoyed, that I venture to express the respect—the much more than respect, I have felt for you, increasing rapidly from the first moment we met."

"'We met—'twas in a crowd!' and what a crowd it was that day to meet our Bishop in the church!" said Beatrice, trying still to turn off the startling earnestness of Lord Iona's manner. "Do you remember so unconsciously telling us that day so much about Sir Allan? and now you have already enlisted me into a plot against him—or rather for his greatest good, though I fear our plan is but a beautiful impossibility."

"Nothing shall be impossible that you and I agree in wishing for. It was a mistake I made in respect to McAlpine—my belief that Sir Allan and you were mutually engaged—that delayed so long, so very long, my declaring how I loved you at once and for ever, how entirely you have possession of my whole heart. I could not even attempt now to live without you."

The deep earnestness of Lord Iona's voice formed a strange contrast to his usual tone of reckless vivacity, which made this expression of his feelings the more impressive. Beatrice paused in perfectly bewildered astonishment at this unexpected declaration, and at the tone of impassioned eloquence in which it was made. She trembled with agitation, perhaps with a certain degree of pleasure, but could no more have spoken than a Greek statue, while Lord Iona continued to speak in a yet more earnest tone, as if afraid of being unfavourably answered, if answered at all.

"Why look so astonished, so absolutely shocked? Never from the first moment have I attempted to conceal my unbounded devotion to you," added Lord Iona in a high-flown style of eloquence; but seeing the almost incredulous amazement depicted in the beautiful eyes of Beatrice, turned for a moment full upon him with inexpressible wonder, he added, "I can no longer hide my actual frenzy, for it is beyond my control, and why should it be controlled? If I can be happy enough to gain your favour, life itself would be too short for my gratitude and happiness; if not, life has no more to interest me, my game is played, my best stake lost, and I throw up the cards."

Beatrice attempted to speak, but the words died away inaudibly on her lips, which merely quivered for a moment in a vain attempt to articulate; but Lord Iona hurriedly continued, in a low tone subdued by emotion—"Give me no answer now. Make no tremendous and irrevocable vows against me at present, but let us have a few bright moments of hope and happiness here together. Let me recommend myself to your favour by weeks, or by months if you will, of devoted assiduity. All your most inconvenient, or even impossible wishes shall be fulfilled. My love shall be worthy of yourself—not the common-place feeling of a common mind. It is pure, lasting, and warm as that glorious sun now blazing so brightly on us both. May our hearts, like its rays, be soon blended into one!"

They walked on slowly together for several minutes, both too much agitated to speak, for Beatrice was not only amazed, and, truth to say, gratified, but almost intimidated at the impassioned eloquence of Lord Iona's tone and manner. At length with an effort she found voice to say, "For your own sake, Lord Iona, try to hate rather than to love me, but at all events to forget me. We can never be more to each other than we are."

"Why? Tell me why. I would give a whole hecatomb of worlds to gain your affection. Is it then true that Sir Allan won the treasure of your first love, and now, though almost under vows as a Jesuit Priest, still keeps his hold over you?" exclaimed Lord Iona, in a tone of reckless despair; and then added, his voice low and sad, "Give me even hope deferred, for if that makes my heart sick, what would hope utterly destroyed be! Say not that you love McAlpine! His spirits are never above half-mast high. He is

a dull horse now that shall not win the race. Can it be for his sake that I am rejected?—that I am to be snuffed out and extinguished at once? Impossible!”

“No, Lord Iona! The same answer awaits all who love me as you do. With a nameless being like myself, neither you nor any one should wish for an alliance, and I never will degrade any family by entering it, till I know by what name I am about to do so. I feel often like an impostor in society, for what title have I to be in any? I, who am worse off than the most desolate orphan, for an orphan would at least know where to look for the tombs of her own parents.”

Tears coursed each other down the cheek of Beatrice, which had become crimson with emotion, and she added in a tone of the deepest earnestness,—“I have no right to your good opinion, and never expected to obtain it. I am nobody—less than nobody! What could make you ever dream of me? It never till this moment entered my head that you could care for me seriously. We are so totally unsuited. It agitates me almost to death! I know how generous it is in you to overlook all the many barriers that ought to divide us, but”——

“Never mind barriers! I like a steeple-hunt over difficulties, the more the better,” said Lord Iona, in a tone of obstinate resignation, and with a momentary relapse into his usual vivacity. “I am not, like Sir Allan, gifted with the power of change, and in every difficulty the gates all open at my approach. If you had all Burke’s Peerage for relations, and the mines of Golconda, with California besides, for a portion, that would make no difference to me. I went to my father this morning, like a dutiful son, to state my case, and ask his consent; I seem scarcely in my sober senses to-day, if I ever have a sense that can be called sober. Quite beyond my hopes, Lord Eaglescarn gave his consent as cordially, heartily, joyfully, as if your pedigree had been measured on twenty pages of Debrett. He made only one stipulation”——

“My religion,” said Beatrice, seeing him hesitate; “of course, Lord Iona, I am as unsuited to your family in creed as in birth! No; I differ from your relations in all the hopes and fears of existence, in our sorrows and consolations, in every thought and feeling, therefore even death itself could scarcely render it more impossible that we should be united. It can never—never be!”

“You fire off a perfect arsenal of objections, but only say the impossibility does not arise from your own aversion to me—that your heart is not finally bricked up against me, and I shall acknowledge no other impediment,” said Lord Iona eagerly. “Father Enatace, the Cardinal of Clanmarina, would, if he could, make Lord Eaglescarn cut me off with a bad shilling, but my father, strange to say, merely stipulated that I should conceal my wishes from his confessor, who has some strange hold over him, quite unaccountable to me, and would not allow of my marriage to a heretic, as he is

pleased to call you. Pius the Sixth said the greatest of sins is to be a heretic, and the next greatest, to favour one; so my honoured parent has really stretched a point on this occasion. Think of the bondage my father must be in, to imagine that I would submit, for half a moment, to the interference in such an affair of that priest, of whose tyranny my father himself is evidently very tired, though very much afraid!"

"No wonder," said Beatrice, "if, according to the strange unjustifiable commands of Loyola, Lord Eaglescairn is obliged to obey Father Eustace, as a stick in the hands of a man who walks with it,—if he must extinguish conscience itself when commanded."

"Well! I am no Telemachus to such a Mentor as Father Eustace. Neither am I that frivolous butterfly of the hour that you may naturally think me, Miss Farinelli, for I jest sometimes when on the verge of distraction. I have a thousand convincing reasons to give, why I deserve your better opinion. Let me then live on the thinnest diet of hope. Even if you despise my love, tell me at least that you believe in it!" said Lord Iona, his utterance becoming quick and earnest, as the expressions of one pouring forth the emotions of an excited and fervent heart, while Beatrice listened with blushing agitation. His eyes flashed, and there was the stamp of a powerful mind in every feature of his handsome countenance, beaming with intellect and sensibility, through the strange mixture in his manner of levity and seriousness. "Be mine, and your every wish, before it be spoken, I shall fulfil,—not a sorrow shall reach you till it has pierced my own heart. Say not a word now, lest it be a negative; but only let my bondage to you continue, for that bondage is my delight. Like any lover in an old play, I must sigh, read poetry, look pale, eat nothing, and remain on my knees here for ever, if that would not weary you; but you evidently do not appreciate my merits. As love, like hay, comes up at first full of thistles, only let me wait (patiently, or impatiently, I do not say which) till your own mind is deliberately made up, whether you can ever do a wiser thing, than to accept the most devoted of your admirers. Only consider how very singular you would be in not liking me! Why, the very dogs in the street cease to bark when they observe my approach, and I have a spare corner in every heart that knows me, but your own."

"Mine is barred by circumstances against all but friendship," said Beatrice in a low timid voice. "If you will accept every grateful feeling of regard on my part, Lord Iona, that is all I have to offer those who generously interest themselves in a nameless orphan. I hope hereafter to witness your happiness"—

"You shall witness none that you do not create and share," exclaimed Lord Iona vehemently; "mere good wishes would be a very stale crumb of comfort to me now. All you can say about my happiness is a mere clap-trap speech, if at the same time you intend consigning me to hopeless wretchedness. You threaten me

with encountering impossibilities, but only say you have the will, and I shall soon find the way to end all impediments; and meanwhile, so long as you remain another hour without forbidding me to hope, that hour is a gain. I could as soon imagine a colour unknown to the rainbow as any happiness without you, yet you leave me in such a gloomy suspense in the meantime that I shall scarcely be able even to bear the society of my own dog."

Hearing a footstep close to them, Lord Iona and Beatrice turned hastily round and discovered Father Eustace a step or two behind, his eyes as usual on the ground, his hands folded together, his whole countenance as destitute of expression as if he had been one of his own wooden images which had been endowed with a power of locomotion. He slightly bowed when Lord Iona made way for him to pass on, while the young man turned contemptuously away from the silent priest to Beatrice, saying in a lively tone, "When you and I become partners he will lose the rubber. If anything could add to the happiness of gaining you, it would be the frustration of Father Eustace's wishes. Now pray do not look a negative as you are doing with that beautiful but obstinate smile. It makes me wretched, and I am like Molière's *Malade imaginaire*—'The physicians have ordered me never to be contradicted.' Nothing is so hard to bear as an unanswered heart, and nothing is so unbecoming to you as that grave forbidding look. You would be a perfect mill-stone to reject me. Yet if it be true that a man must be superior to a woman before she can love him, I must despair of ever gaining Beatrice Farinelli."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I cannot tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me."—SCOTT.

BEATRICE FARINELLI had been endowed by nature with a lively imagination, and there was moreover no small tinge of romance in her disposition, both of which tendencies were excited to the highest degree of activity by her present circumstances. The attachment of Sir Allan, so long apparently dormant, had seemed, ever since she considered him so changed, a mere boyish partiality, which she believed herself conscientiously bound never fully to reciprocate, therefore she had carefully guarded her own feelings lest they should exceed towards him that true sisterly affection to which she believed that they ought to be limited, and to which she had little difficulty in restoring them. It was otherwise in respect to Lord Iona. The depth and power of his attachment to herself had taken Beatrice completely by surprise, and caused her a perfectly new feeling of, truth to say, delightful embarrassment. His

whole manner and character were piquant and original; nothing that he ever said or did resembled anybody but himself; none of his ideas were common, like an old tune set to a barrel-organ; but even in expressing the depth and sincerity of his love it was done as no one else would have done it, and Beatrice, agitated as she was, could not but smile at the recollection. In his graver mood, however, Lord Iona had touched a chord in the heart of Beatrice, which seemed for the first time in her life to vibrate, revealing an hitherto undeveloped faculty of love, such as her young heart had never before experienced. Like other girls, Beatrice had often dreamed over an imaginary declaration of devoted love, and now her own heart whispered that none but a mere automaton could have remained insensible to the disinterested and generous preference of such a man as Lord Iona. She was touched by the noble frankness with which he had, in half-spoken accents, hurriedly but energetically declared it, and as there is to the labyrinth of every human heart some infallible clue, that of Beatrice had certainly been discovered at last.

Had Lord Iona been son and heir to Cræsus as well as heir to one of the proudest coronets in Scotland, that would have only seemed an additional barrier between them; but great was the surprise of Beatrice, mingled with some rather uneasy curiosity on the subject, to find that Lord Eaglescain entertained such treasonable thoughts against the arbitrary will of Father Eustace as to dream of encouraging Lord Iona's attachment to herself without his sanction, or rather contrary to his wishes. She rubbed her eyes to ascertain that she really was now wide awake, and really at Eaglescain Castle, having thought that Lord Eaglescain would rather have stood in the way of an express train than withstood to the face, on any pretext, the decree on any matter, public or domestic, of that name, now in connexion with Sir Allan's perversion so dismally familiar to her thoughts, "Father Eustace."

Beatrice once told every thought of her heart to Lady Edith, who seemed to grow young again under the influence of that affectionate interest with which she listened to all the acknowledgments of her adopted child; endeared to her more and more every day by the unbounded confidence which subsisted between them; not a secret having ever for a moment divided their minds. It was with great astonishment, therefore, and with long continued incredulity, that Lady Edith was soon after this led to suspect that her own beloved Beatrice had at length some concealment from her, and that her mind had become suddenly preoccupied on some subject which she was evidently anxious to avoid mentioning. Once or twice, Lady Edith, when she entered the room unexpectedly, found Beatrice intently brooding over papers which she hastily huddled into a drawer; while, with greatly heightened colour, she hurriedly spoke on any subject apparently the farthest from that with which her mind was entirely preoccupied. Lady Edith had

an entire trust in her much-loved Beatrice; and though surrounded by those who were opposed to her in faith and feeling, she never for a single instant doubted the loyalty of attachment with which Beatrice would ever remain devoted to the religion and to the affections of her own home. Still, though Lady Edith, with all the delicacy of a refined and high-born disposition, refrained from the most distant hint that her young *protegée* had become unaccountably absent and thoughtful, she inwardly felt a deep increasing solicitude, raised by degrees to the utmost endurable pitch, when plainly perceiving that the dear girl had obviously some hidden anxiety within her heart of hearts, not to be alluded to:—while avoiding all that really interested her, she, in a tone of the strictest confidence and the deepest mystery, consulted Lady Edith which picture in the gallery was thought the finest painting, and whether Lady Anne's new song suited her soprano voice. There had evidently arisen a small dark closet in the mind of Beatrice now, that Lady Edith was not to enter; and most anxiously did that kindest of friends await the time when her motherly anxiety should be relieved by a clear explanation of the mystery which had suddenly stood up like a wall between them;—but it came not.

In most country houses, the hostess good-humouredly assumes to herself the patronage of arranging at breakfast a programme for the amusements of the day,—who shall go in her chariot after luncheon to the old ruined abbey in one direction, who shall climb up the wet slippery path in a distant glen to admire the celebrated cascade, and who shall undertake a day's shopping in the neighbouring country town with herself.

Lady Eaglescain had a polite but peremptory habit of thus settling every visitor's plans for the day, and always began with overturning whatever project any one else had formed for himself. With a benevolent tyranny, which called itself a friendly interest in the diversion of her guests, every one must be amused in her way and in that only. There was no escape! The guests most difficult to please were always those to whom her chief interest was directed; for there is in all houses a premium on discontent, so that those who are known to be fastidious become objects of assiduous attention, but those who are known to be easily satisfied are left to their good-humoured insignificance. Lady Eaglescain, dressed like a peacock, so gorgeous was the variety of her colours, stepped every day with a smile of almost royal condescension into her barouche and four, which was decorated inside and outside with a shower of coronets on the lace, the hammer-cloth, and the trappings. The postilions and outriders appeared in all the rainbow magnificence of their gaudy liveries—yellow faced with blue—and two powdered servants, quite up to London pitch in their height, in the length of their gold-headed sticks, and in the precise angle at which they poised those sticks on the roof of the carriage, ushered **into this exceedingly dignified equipage** the very select few invited

to accompany Lady Eaglescairn herself. Among those marked out for this ineffable distinction Beatrice was invariably one, and almost as constantly the party became completed by the addition of Mr. Clinton and Father Eustace. They kept up the conversation incessantly, and had often dived so deeply into subjects of interesting discussion, that the two clergymen were afterwards invited along with Beatrice, who listened always in silence, to finish the argument by accompanying Lady Eaglescairn to her private sitting-room.

Lady Eaglescairn patronisingly called Beatrice "A perfect dot; a darling!" and gave her other terms of condescending endearment; but still Beatrice could not for her very life feel comfortable, happy, or at ease under such a flood of supernatural civilities. She perceived that Lady Eaglescairn's delight was always to patronise some one favoured individual to the exclusion of all others. If she could make one selected personage happy and every other in the room miserable, it would have delighted her to exercise so much power. If there were but two in the room of equal merit and of equal importance, one was invariably left out, while Lady Eaglescairn sat in a corner whispering to the other with well-acted vivacity, assuming an air of astonishment or amusement, to raise the curiosity of those unfortunate enough to be excluded, and Beatrice found herself promoted now to be "the Cynthia of the minute."

Amidst a cluster of splendid equipages, regularly every day grouped round the castle gate after luncheon to take every body everywhere, there was one specially appointed for Lady Edith and Mrs. Clinton. It was a low, small, old-fashioned pony-carriage, drawn by what seemed the father of all ponies, shaggy and shattered looking. Even the well-bred servants scarcely restrained a titter, when watching the stiff slow pace at which this respectable quadruped felt disposed to move. Lady Edith, however, looked in no degree disconcerted, but with her usual quiet grace placed herself in the humble conveyance appointed for her use, and when exchanging a sly glance with Beatrice, her smile was the same intellectual, benignant smile as ever.

Lady Edith, who often said that neither music nor painting ever afforded her more delight than architecture, had wandered one morning meditatively round the beautiful little structure of St. Bridget's Chapel, admiring with enlightened taste its light and airy symmetry, when she suddenly observed a low massy door like that of a prison standing ajar, and believing that it led into the vestry, she gently pushed it open and quietly stole in. To her extreme surprise, Lady Edith found herself in a cell, precisely realizing her conception of one in La Trappe. The floor, like the ceiling, was of rough unhewn stone, a wooden bench evidently intended as a couch to sleep on stood beside a rustic table, on which lay something that seemed intended for bread, though black and hard as a piece of coal. An earthen jar of water stood beside it, the contents purposely

rendered nauseous by a mixture of bitter herbs, and a gaudily decorated missal lay open on the table, beside a crucifix of stucco, and a rosary of amber beads. In a distant corner appeared a large image dressed in blue satin and gold, meant apparently to represent St. Bridget herself, and before this idol, full length on the floor, lay motionless as death a female form, which Lady Edith did not at once discover to be that of a living being. While she stood transfixed to the spot for several minutes with wonder and curiosity, she became startled by hearing a rapid muttering sound from the recumbent figure as if the same words were repeated in frantic haste over and over and over again with ceaseless perseverance. The vain repetitions seemed to go on without end, and when Lady Edith, who almost expected to see the black face of a Hindoo worshipper, obtained at last a momentary glimpse of the stranger's features, it was a sight she never to her latest hour forgot. A countenance so emaciated, so expressive of utter, hopeless wretchedness she had never hitherto beheld, yet there was something silly and almost idiotic in the eye, painful to look on. The recluse's hands were as soiled and dirty as a housemaid's gloves for mending the fire; and the dress like that of a corpse, added to the mournful effect of that woe-begone face. A fold of linen was round the stranger's forehead, and a drapery of white cloth, tightly pinned round her face, hung disconsolately down to her very feet, so as almost to cover her black serge gown. A scourge lay beside her, as well as the stucco crucifix, the finely decorated missal, and the rosary of amber beads.

Never could Lady Edith witness any human sorrow without an earnest desire to relieve it, and never had she seen any before, without a consoling certainty that her sympathy would be acceptable. Here, however, a wide gulf of difference divided her from this object of her heartfelt commiseration, and though anxiously desirous to offer the sufferer some comfort, she felt as if her only duty now might be to withdraw in silence. Lady Edith hesitated another moment, and advanced another step, but paused again, and before she could decide what to do, the stranger, either not observing her or not choosing to observe her, had vanished through a low gate that seemed as if it led into the vaults beneath. Long, long afterwards, the memory of Lady Edith was haunted by that face of indescribable misery, and by the sort of dim idea which sometimes unaccountably besets people, that in some far off period of almost forgotten existence, she had seen that corpse-like countenance before.

Long and deeply did Lady Edith meditate on the strangely secret and mysterious religion which was now being acted out in its fullest perfection around her:—the frantic efforts to gain over converts made by those who expected to escape a few centuries of purgatory for every proselyte,—the fantastic austerities, the picturesque dresses, the attitudes of prostration, the spiritual pride, the want of truth, the abandonment of every natural duty, the contempt for every simple pleasure, and in short, the masquerade of life in which

those she now associated with spoke and acted always artificially. There is in the natural mind of man a delight in mystery, and here it was to be found even in trifles. The only person in the Eaglescairn family to be thoroughly understood was Lord Iona; and Lady Edith smiled when she thought of his eccentric, amusing, mock-modest, whimsical, sublime, and absurd, but perfectly open-hearted conversation, while she could not but observe the rapidly increasing earnestness of his endeavours to please Beatrice. All the assiduous attention of all the party at Eaglescairn to her beautiful *protégée* had made no change in the unaffected simplicity of Beatrice's manner, or in the devoted affection she testified, with if possible more respectful gratitude than ever, to her kind benefactress, who felt conscious that it required no small degree of moral courage, as well as of right feeling, to testify, as she invariably did, her unshaken allegiance to the wishes and feelings of her adopted mother. Few mothers, indeed, receive from their own daughters in society so heartfelt an homage of affectionate consideration as Beatrice delighted to show towards her own best of friends.

Still there had arisen, within these few days, a certain, but indescribable change in the expression of Beatrice's countenance, and while Lady Edith's elevated mind was incapable of being tortured by idle curiosity, she could not but observe that the lovely young face had become pale, and that the voice, usually cheerful as the song of a bird in spring, was recently subdued almost to sadness. Lady Edith, always observant, was not likely to overlook anything affecting the happiness of her own incomparable Beatrice, whose manner to herself seemed to become even more devotedly affectionate, in proportion as her confidence appeared so unaccountably withheld. Lady Edith on her return home one day found Beatrice pensively seated with her work beside the fire, which threw a deep red glare over every object, and it could not be doubted that there were traces of tears on the young girl's cheek, which was ghastly pale, while her fingers trembled visibly as she attempted to continue her occupation. When Lady Edith made her presence known by gently breaking the deep silence that reigned in the room, Beatrice visibly started as from a dream, she coloured deeply, and while evidently trying to shun observation, she yet hurriedly rose, and with almost solemn affection, which had in it a sort of mysterious charm, kissed her benefactress, then sitting down by her side, continued with a shaking hand and nervous haste to work, while her face looked flushed and anxious.

"Beatrice, what is the matter?" asked Lady Edith, in a tone of calm, deep, earnest affection; and then, seeing her young companion looking first to the right and then to the left, with heightened colour, and in evident perplexity how to avoid answering, Lady Edith added, in a low tone of concentrated emotion,

"I can trust you entirely, Beatrice. If anything must be concealed from me, I am sure it is not on your part willingly,—but,

my dear child, be very wary whom you confide in here. No one knows better than yourself what ambuscades and manœuvres are considered praiseworthy, to kidnap a convert in this house, therefore I would gladly have given you my sympathy and support in any perplexities that may have arisen here. What they are, I cannot conjecture ; but promise me you will take no step of importance without my knowledge."

"And consent," added Beatrice, eagerly. "Dear Lady Edith ! if you could but know how gradually I have been led on since we came here into perplexities, quite inexplicable at present !—I was wrong to be hurried into any promise ; but who could have escaped or evaded the snare ? If it involved in the remotest degree my principles or affectionate gratitude to you, then indeed I should have asserted my liberty, but—"

"Beatrice ! there is nothing selfish in my curiosity, therefore, now, since you have convinced me that no danger threatens your own faith, I shall calmly await the time when you can follow the dictates of your kind spirit by restoring our confidence to its former uninterrupted state. My own heart is like the dried-up bed of a torrent, empty and desolate, but for that spring of cheerfulness derived from the happiness of my adopted child. I have lived to witness the prostration of every other earthly hope,—let me then trust that your present anxieties are but a light and temporary eloud."

Beatrice fervently embraced Lady Edith, who was startled to feel the hot tears pouring in torrents from those eyes, the smiling brightness of which had hitherto been her delight to look upon, and the small, white, transparent hand trembled as she held it in her own.

"Why is this ?" asked Lady Edith, in a tone of almost commanding interest, but immediately retracting the expression of her anxiety, she hurriedly added, "No, Beatrice ! I am wrong ; I promised to trust you, and I do."

Lady Edith, as if afraid to rely on her own fortitude, hurried out of the room, and Beatrice, throwing herself on the sofa, burst into an agony of weeping. It was no ordinary distress that could so greatly move the well-regulated mind of Beatrice, but she was indeed plunged into the deep waters of a conflict in which it was painfully difficult to see her way, though firm as a rock in all that related to her principles and affections.

Lady Edith having accidentally returned next morning earlier than usual, without executing the whole programme mapped out for her by Lady Eaglescairn, set out to enjoy the bright, glittering sunshine of a winter day, by strolling alone in the magnificent gardens, where no labour or expense had been spared to keep up a continual succession of plants to decorate the chapel. When about to enter the gate, Lady Edith's eyes were suddenly attracted by a sight which filled her with astonishment and dismay. Glancing

along a dark, silent shrubby walk, not usually frequented, she observed the gigantic angular figure of Mr. Ambrose, looming in tall and gloomy mystery at a distance. He was walking slowly along, hanging his head down, in obviously very deep conference, and by his side, there could be not one moment's doubt, that in most confidential conversation was Beatrice. Mr. Ambrose seemed speaking with a vehemence perfectly startling, and his gesticulation became more and more energetic, while Beatrice, with her handkerchief held to her eyes as if weeping, shrunk evidently with timidity, and yet seemed as if unable to escape listening.

Lady Edith hesitated for a short moment what to do, but her characteristic was to be always frank and above-board; therefore, though resolved never to force the confidence of Beatrice, she nevertheless determined to alter her course, and at least to interrupt this uncommon interview.

So intent were both Beatrice and Father Ambrose on whatever they were saying, that neither saw Lady Edith till she had advanced close to the *tête-à-tête*, and smilingly held out her hand to her adopted child, who fervently clasped it, but changed colour vividly, even painfully; and though there was a smile of affection in her bright dark eyes, they had evidently been dimmed by recent tears. The first impulse of Beatrice was to receive her kind benefactress with an exclamation of joyous astonishment, the next to turn away with a look of inexpressible distress, and, burying her hands and face in the clustering ringlets of her dark brown hair, to burst into an agony of weeping, which it was evidently out of her power to control.

Mr. Ambrose stood calmly looking on. His remarkable eyes seemed vacantly fixed on the garden wall. He might have been counting the bricks, but his look hardly expressed intelligence enough for that. Nothing ever surprised or agitated him, and from his cold, polite, matter-of-course reception of Lady Edith, it might have appeared as if he knew an hour before that she was coming, and that it was impossible she should not have appeared at the very moment, and at the very spot that she did.

As Lady Edith approached, Mr. Ambrose had uttered a deep, sepulchral "Hem!" and gazed earnestly at Beatrice till he caught her eye, while in his own there was an expression both of warning and admonition. He once more glanced at Beatrice as if to remind her of something in which they had a mutual understanding, and then assuming a careless, off-hand look, said to Lady Edith, "I am in luck this morning, as to accidental rencontres—"

"With Lady Edith your meeting is accidental, Mr. Ambrose," said Beatrice, her countenance in a glow of indignant crimson at the false impression he evidently meant to convey: "but we met by appointment."

"I did not say otherwise, Miss Farinelli!" replied Mr. Ambrose, with a look of appalling dignity at Beatrice, who stood tremblingly

and tearfully silent. "But our little tryste was about nothing of any particular importance—nothing."

"It must have been something rather peculiar that could agitate my Beatrice, as I see her now," replied Lady Edith, steadily fixing her eye on the truthful countenance of her adopted child, which had become pale with emotion. "Whatever may be concealed from me is, I am certain, without her consent, but all I see makes me resolve as soon as possible to take her to our own quiet home."

"You need have no fears! She is a very stout theologian," replied Father Ambrose, with a rather irritated laugh; then added in an under tone of bitter malignity, "As soon as possible may not be so soon as you expect! You are naturally surprised, Lady Edith, to find Miss Farinelli somewhat agitated, but I was relating a most singular story, in which she felt deeply interested. Wero you not, Miss Farinelli?"

"Inexpressibly so," replied Beatrice, impetuously clenching her small white hands together, while fresh tears sprung into her eyes, and poured down her glowing cheeks. "Oh! tell me more. Tell me all."

"Not under a thousand and one nights!" replied Mr. Ambrose, slightly shrugging his shoulders: then with another cautionary glance to Miss Farinelli, which seemed both to threaten and command her, he hastily disappeared into the thickest groves of the deer forest. Beatrice lowered her eyes in painful confusion when thus left alone with Lady Edith; her breathing was fluttered like that of a captured bird, but it was evident she dared not trust herself to speak. Tears fell gently over her face like the dropping of an evening shower, while she walked on evidently overwhelmed with perplexity beside Lady Edith, who looked thoughtful, melancholy, and perplexed.

"Beatrice," said she at last, affectionately leaning on the arm of her beloved *protégée*; "Tell me, have I done wrong in venturing to bring you here? How has that artful man been tampering with your feelings? Does he pretend to know the history of your origin? Explain to your old friend why that young face is now blistered with such tears as through life I never saw you shed before. Speak to me, my own dear Beatrice,—what can a stranger have said to cause such agitation as I see now?"

There was a pin-drop silence of some moments, while Beatrice, with a quick impulsive emotion, throwing herself into the arms of Lady Edith, wept convulsively, but could not articulate. It seemed a strong burst of passionate grief, as hopeless as it was bitter. Instead of becoming more composed, the young girl's agitation visibly increased, until Lady Edith gazed with apprehensive astonishment at the pale countenance of her much loved *protégée*, convulsed with sorrow that she seemed unable to control, and yet more unable to explain.

"My dear child! my own Beatrice!" exclaimed Lady Edith with mournful earnestness, "we seem in a painful dream! I reproach myself for having brought you here. It was well meant, but rash. There is a blight on the happiness of all who come within the reach of a cruel superstition. No one should be exposed to such an ordeal! I was tempted by the vain hope of regaining my place in the confidence of one dear old pupil. Must I fear to lose both?"

"No! no! dearest Aunt Edith! I shall die first," replied Beatrice, hiding her face on the shoulder of her benefactress, and riveting her arms around her neck with the ardent affection of a child; "I am bewildered, and scarcely know what I may answer. More than life I owe to you, and nothing—oh, nothing ever shall part us! Let your dear mind be at rest about my faith,—that under your teaching has been grounded on too clear a foundation ever to be shaken, or in the slightest degree disturbed,—but—but—oh, Aunt Edith, my best of friends,—I am under a dreadful necessity,—under a solemn promise to give you no hint of what is the weight now oppressing my heart. It is nothing wrong,—nothing even doubtfully right,—nothing relating to my religion,—at least not directly, but—"

Beatrice stammered, hesitated, coloured deeply, and paused, while Lady Edith's eyes remained fixed upon her with affectionate earnestness, expressive of deep anxiety, and after a moment's reflection, she said—

"My very dear girl! I shall believe nothing unpleasant so long as it can be avoided. Let us now return to our own peaceful home. Let us forget all this, and be happy as we were before in our own simple faith and single-hearted occupations. Yes, Beatrice, let us return home to-morrow."

"I cannot,—I dare not," replied Beatrice, with a deep gasp for breath, and in a low whisper, which became, from extreme agitation, almost inaudible. "Oh, Aunt Edith! it is not in my power now to return to our dear home, any more than it is in my power to return to the careless ease of my happy childhood. I cannot!"

"You cannot, Beatrice! what am I to think? What can this mean?" exclaimed Lady Edith becoming most seriously alarmed. "Who has acquired any right thus to influence you—to plant a barrier between us—to raise any secret that shall alienate your confidence from the only remaining friend of your early youth? There must be something wrong? If they are beguiling you with any romantic history of your origin, be very sure of its truth before you are led to act. Whatever befalls, however, I shall take you home to-morrow."

Beatrice wept so convulsively that her answer was almost inaudible, yet Lady Edith with difficulty gathered that she spoke a negative, and exclaimed in accents of agitated astonishment, "If I go home to-morrow, Beatrice, surely you do not refuse to accompany me!"

"I cannot go!" sobbed Beatrice, clasping Lady Edith more closely in her arms. "Oh! why cannot I tell you all?"

Lady Edith at this moment felt Beatrice lean more heavily on her shoulder,—the next moment she lay prostrate and insensible at her feet. Never had Beatrice fainted before! Now her aspect was perfectly deathlike, and the time seemed to Lady Edith endless, during which every means she could think of had been tried in vain to bring back life and consciousness. All proved totally unavailing, for no corpse could have looked more cold, still, and insensible.

"Beatrice! my own Beatrice! they shall not part us!" exclaimed Lady Edith, in a voice of such piercing anguish that it might almost have awakened the dead, while stooping over the pale young face she kissed her cold cheek, chafed her temples, and rubbed her hands. Still she moved not, till suddenly life and consciousness became at once restored, and she sat up looking wildly but earnestly round, exclaiming, "A mother did you say? Where, where!" Checking herself suddenly, the next moment she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

So deeply were Lady Edith and Beatrice occupied with each other that they continued quite unconscious of a light step approaching on the turf, till Lord Iona stood close beside them, his intelligent eye fixed on the agitated group, and his whole countenance expressive of indignant sympathy.

"I guess all!" he exclaimed with friendly interest, and shaking his riding-whip relentlessly after the retreating figure of Mr. Ambrose; "my mother and Father Eustace have held several cabinet councils lately, which is a sure sign that they think somebody or another too happy for this world. Father Eustace is, like Mother Carey's chickens, the sure precursor to a storm. What mischief have they done you? Tell me, Miss Farinelli. My mother should conceal nothing from so dutiful a son; but her great delight is in little mysteries. If her poodle is going to be washed it is a secret. I have often promised solemnly not to tell a million of trifles that no mortal on earth would care to hear! Miss Farinelli, it makes me wretched to see you unhappy; say something—say anything—but do relieve my suspense. Has my mother a share in your distress? for if she has, there is no well so deep from which I shall not bring up the truth."

"I am very peculiarly circumstanced!" stammered Beatrice, while her countenance assumed a glow of modest embarrassment at the fervent earnestness of tone and look with which Lord Iona thus offered her his services. "The only duty that I plainly see before me is, to say nothing. No one values more than I do the kindness of such dear friends, but the only proof of gratitude must be withheld. I dare not say why my mind is so agitated."

"There! I knew it!" exclaimed Lord Iona, almost pleased to have his suspicions confirmed. "There has been some Popish plot hatching for the last week; but the invisible Guy Fawkes

shall be detected! You think it possible to conceal a secret from me, but no hound on a scent can track one out better. When your happiness is concerned, Miss Farinelli, I shall not be idle—”

“It is not the trifle you think,” interrupted Beatrice, touched and gratified by the honest, open-hearted desire of Lord Iona to serve her. “Many interests are deeply at stake! Yours—mine—”

“Let but our interests be united, and I care not for the consequences!” exclaimed Lord Iona, taking Beatrice’s hand, which trembled with agitation, but for the first time she did not withdraw it. At this moment Sir Allan advanced with a hurried step along the path; but when he saw the look of earnest interest with which Lord Iona was speaking to Beatrice, he hastily turned away, slouched his hat over his temples, and disappeared with a sudden gesture of mute despair.

“Father Eustace has a genius for intrigues that should have placed him above Metternich or Talleyrand,” observed Lord Iona, totally unconscious of Sir Allan’s momentary appearance; “but here he has a very insufficient scope for his talent. He must feel like a forest-tree in a flower-pot. The influence he exercises over his victims in this house, especially over my father, is marvellous. When any one does wrong at a priest’s instigation, I always think of that rascally little puppet Punch, whose crimes are all instigated by the invisible director behind a curtain below; and the game of life in our own castle is carried on as in a Marionette theatre, the strings and pulleys guided by Father Eustace! I wish he guided them better.”

Lord Iona gave a most vindictive cough as he concluded this philippic against the obnoxious confessor, and his animation seemed to take effect in one respect, that it revived Beatrice by diverting her thoughts from the subjects which too deeply engrossed them. With the buoyancy of girlhood she smilingly listened to Lord Iona’s tirade, yet there was a burning hectic on her cheek, and a dazzling lustre in her eye which startled Lady Edith, and before night Beatrice was dangerously ill of a nervous fever, brought on evidently, the doctor said, by some secret anxiety and distress of mind.

It was evident, Dr. McIndre said, that Miss Farinelli had met with some sudden shock occasioning her great mental excitement and therefore the most intense quietness of mind and body were absolutely essential to give any hope of her recovery. This Lady Edith did her utmost to secure, by herself sitting calmly and alone beside the bed of her own Beatrice; yet if for a single hour she left her charge, it always seemed as if some new agitation had seized the beloved invalid, whose burning fever daily increased, while she talked so incessantly, rapidly, and deliriously, that it became impossible to distinguish a word. In calmer moments, there was in the aspect of Beatrice a look of anxious dejection, which she appeared unable for a moment to throw off. Her eye followed Lady Edith

with an expression of more ardent affection than ever, but mingled with a look of almost compassionate sympathy for which it was impossible to account.

Sir Allan came several times a day to inquire at the door for Beatrice, and mingled with his almost despairing anxiety for the sufferer was a look of affectionate commiseration for Lady Edith herself, which startled and perplexed her. Lord Iona alone, of all those around, seemed perfectly natural and perfectly comprehensible, for he almost besieged the door, for ever on the alert to ascertain the latest intelligence, and for ever keeping his hopes up to certainties, that she must speedily recover, saying, "If she has fair play, and they do not drive her delirious with their clandestine intrigues, Miss Farinelli will do well. There is a spring of life in the young that can do battle with almost any amount of illness, and who ever had more perfect health till now than Miss Farinelli? What I want to know is, how she has been frightened or worried into this fever. Depend upon it, Lady Edith, this illness is Father Eustacism in some way or other, and never rest till you wring out the truth. Probably some vision or apparition has been got up, by means of a magic lantern and phosphorus, to convert her. They tried it all upon me abroad, but I am ghost-proof and detected all their pious frauds. Not a string or a pulley escaped my notice. The gorgeous dress, Latin canticles, and theatrical processions were all thrown away upon my simple taste and feelings."

"You had good English eyes of the old school, wearing the spectacles of sound sense and Protestant judgment," replied Lady Edith, smiling kindly at Lord Iona's rattle-pated humour. "A fashionable clergyman used to boast once, that he had a satin and velvet congregation, but abroad people have a satin and velvet religion, all made up of painting and music, dress and attitudes."

"On some minds dress has an incredible effect," observed Lord Iona. "What would Lord Burleigh's nod be without his wig, and what would Father Eustace be without his tonsure? It requires a great mind, like my own, to rise above the influence of embroidered robes, gorgeous images, and finely decorated processions. When the present Pope fled as footman to Gaeta, the mob at Rome threw nearly a hundred cardinals' hats into the Tiber. These floated down the stream two and two, slowly, in such solemn procession that one could not but fancy the venerable cardinals were underneath; but these majestic hats are so accustomed to go in procession that, even out of their own element, they fall into line quite instinctively. I often wish that by putting on another man's hat, I could put on his thoughts and ideas for the moment and know all that is in his head!"

"I wish you could in that case put on Father Eustace's," replied Lady Edith, thoughtfully. "Who can ever read the mysterious mind of that man? It would puzzle Lavater himself to find any expression in his countenance, and like the Upas-tree, does he not

cast a blight upon all he looks on? Poor Bessie McDonald, once bright, fresh, and cheerful as any wild flower on a hedge, but now, evidently sinking into an early grave,—Robert Carre utterly crushed in every honest-hearted hope he cherished of earthly happiness,—Allan McAlpine, too, and my own beloved Beatrice! It is a fearful wreck!”

Lady Edith's voice grew low and impressive, she slowly sunk upon a chair, covered her face with her hands, and seemed for some moments utterly overwhelmed, while Lord Iona paced rapidly up and down the room like a caged lion, his eyes flashing with excitement, and his whole countenance indicating irrepressible agitation. He paused at length, and his countenance had assumed a look of calm solemn determination, when he said, in accents of recovered composure, “This shall not last! Be the consequences what they may, my father must explain himself. Either Father Eustace or I leave this house to-morrow. We have been too long under the same roof already. I have had the presumption to fancy that everything and everybody shall be set right by me, but hitherto I have been merely a well-intentioned fool,” said Lord Iona, in a tone of self-depreciation; “but for the sake of Beatrice Farinelli what could I not be? when did my heart ever cease to hope? and without her my life hereafter would be one long and melancholy blank,—one ceaseless thought of the only being I ever could truly love. Lady Edith, from this hour you shall see me a new man entirely.”

“I am not sure if you shall have my consent to so entire a change!” said Lady Edith, kindly holding out her hand to Lord Iona, as he was about to withdraw. “My old acquaintance, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, had so much good and agreeable in him that I positively forbid the metamorphosis. No! Lord Iona, I have a great love of what is genuine, and I am an implicit believer in you. Assist me, then, to rescue those I love from their present thralldom, and no language could ever express the gratitude I shall feel.”

“I would lay down my life to merit it, by serving Miss Farinelli,” replied Lord Iona with deep emotion. “Yes! it may cost me much, if half what I have lately conjectured be true. Yesterday, Lady Edith, I gained access to that delirious girl, McDonald, who made me open the eyes of astonishment with all she said. I afterwards conversed with that heart-broken man, Robert Carre. Poor fellow,—in his awkwardness and agitation during our interview, I am sure he must have bitten his gloves to tatters, and eaten up an entire Bandana pocket-handkerchief! If all he communicated be true, then ruin and disgrace await this house; but nevertheless, I would tread on red-hot ploughshares that justice may be done.”

Lord Iona said these words with agitated rapidity, and before Lady Edith could at all comprehend their import he had vanished from the room. Some moments afterwards he knocked at the door of Lord Eaglescain's study, where the father and son continued for several hours shut up together. Evening closed in and the con-

ference still continued, but the louder tones in which it commenced had fallen into the lowest whisper, and when Lord Iona left his father's room his face was lividly pale.

"It is as I feared. That is indeed a stunning blow!" he muttered to himself; "I must probe the story to the bottom, and then, *coute qui coute*, the truth shall be proclaimed on the very house-tops! I will have no concealments, though the dream of my life may never now be realized. My father still holds back something but it shall be dragged out to the light of day. His terror of Father Eustace is frightful, but the confessor must now become an economist of lies, and not make him tell more for the benefit of Rome than are absolutely necessary, or there are symptoms of rebellion. Fear in this case shall not be, if my father listens to me, the fear of man, but of God, and duty shall be done though it were to make myself a nameless beggar."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"If I am right thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh! teach my heart
To find that better way."—POPE.

PERHAPS the most startling sound that can be heard in a house by the ear of man is that of a bell ringing suddenly in the dead of night; and such was the *réveillé* which disturbed every inhabitant of Eaglescairn that night about one o'clock. Peal after peal rang through the old castle; and when all its inmates had hurriedly answered the summons, it was discovered that Lord Eaglescairn had been taken dangerously ill. It was a sudden and total collapse of strength with which he had been seized; and he lay on his bed perfectly conscious, but pale, cold, and feeble, as if life itself were ebbing away for want of fuel to support its vital power.

It is said that every man's house is his castle; but this is not the case with any house in which a confessor lives, as there he must reign supreme. When Father Eustace anxiously approached his bed, the feeble sufferer turned away with a visible shudder; but a faint smile lighted up his wan, almost livid face, when Lord Iona approached, to whom he feebly held out his trembling hand. No son could have received such a token of kindness with more ardent affection, but a tear fell upon the hand when Lord Iona grasped it in his own. To see a strong man reduced to the weakness of a child, and a stern, proud nature melted into softness, is a sight that few can witness without emotion, and of those few Lord Iona was not one. He clasped his hand over his face, which was convulsed

with agitation, and seated himself by the bed, resolved not to stir from his father's side while life and consciousness remained.

To Lady Edith Tremorne her own position became daily more perplexing, yet with all her ingenuity she could not see her way out of it. From hour to hour every imaginable attention was lavished on Beatrice by Lady Eaglescain, who stole on tiptoe frequently into the room, and adopted in speaking to her a tone of the most caressing affection. "My dearest, dear, *dear* girl!" was the very least of her endearing expressions to Beatrice every morning when she entered; but to Lady Edith, after a slight, formal curtesy of recognition, as cold and stiff as the North Pole itself, the noble hostess seemed to become perfectly unconscious of her existence.

Lady Edith could not but observe with affectionate emotion how anxiously—most anxiously—Beatrice watched the thermometer of Lady Eaglescain's civility to her, and that a universal blush overspread the face, arms, and neck of her young favourite, when the least slight was inflicted on her. It seemed, nevertheless, that Beatrice either had not the strength or the courage to make an audible observation on the subject; but she merely became, if possible, the more eager to evince, when they were alone, her own grateful and most unbounded affection.

When Lady Edith, the morning after Beatrice's illness, took out, as a matter of course, her Bible, that they might as usual read a chapter together, the young invalid fixed her eyes on the well-known, long-loved volume, and her aged friend was surprised to observe that large tears fell slowly from the eyes of Beatrice, as she thoughtfully gazed at the accustomed pages, so long associated in her young heart with all her happiest hours, with all her deepest feelings, with every hope for time as well as for eternity.

As Lady Edith sat with the large old Bible open before her, Beatrice pensively contemplated that noble forehead, the firm yet mild expression of her beautiful mouth, and the perfectly simple elegance of her benevolent aspect, till the entire picture seemed as if Vandyke should have painted such a portrait, and as if even his sublime pencil could scarcely do justice to that mild, earnest countenance, while reading the sentences she loved so well. No nun prostrate on the floor could have felt more truly done with the world, in so far as she was personally concerned; but at the same time, the keenest votary of this world's enjoyment never felt so true a pleasure as she did, when an opportunity occurred of extending to others the same divinely-written source of consolation and of hope that proved always sufficient for herself.

"Dear Beatrice," observed Lady Edith, "how pitiable was the case of those unhappy monks in former days, who immured both themselves and this holy book from all mankind! They sternly prohibited sinners such as ourselves from seeking in these enlightened pages for such words of mercy as we are reading now. The young, such as you, they prevented from opening this precious

volume, to gather precepts for their future life; the aged, like myself, must not draw from it a lesson how to die. No morning chapter inspired them to enter the busy day with trust in God; no evening lesson expressed their thankfulness for past blessings, or inculcated forgiveness to foes, or charity to those from whom they differed. This is the volume, Beatrice, which I first taught you in early infancy, and which, hereafter, you must read to me when I hover tremblingly on the brink of an eternal world."

Beatrice seized Lady Edith's hand, and passionately kissed it, saying, "Your teaching has been my sufficient safeguard in every recent trial. Such prayers as yours are registered for ever in my behalf; but when I hear, as of late, that the intellects of many young ladies have been excited to actual insanity by the awful views of eternity forced clandestinely upon their thoughts by these Popish priests; when I know that several are now necessarily placed in asylums; when I hear of even poor Bessie McDonald, more fit for a strait waistcoat than for actual everyday life, I do feel, Aunt Edith, that there are trials of my faith awaiting me that call for a double fortification of prayer and of Scripture reading."

"Let us leave this house, Beatrice. No spell can be strong enough to hold us back from our safe, quiet, peaceful home. Oh, that we had never left it!"

Beatrice hid her head in the bed-clothes, and a low, deep sob was her only answer. Hours passed on, and she lay still as a corpse, while Lady Edith, finding that the punctual pony-carriage, so faithfully dedicated to her use, had waited some time, resolved to leave Beatrice to the perfect quiet she so much needed, and herself—wind, weather, and Lady Eaglescain permitting—to call on old Farmer Carre, who had fervently begged to see her once more before he died.

Whenever Lady Eaglescain made a favourite arrangement, there was no escape; and she had resolved that Lady Edith should be driven to visit a wet, slippery glen, six miles off; therefore, as usual, it must be so. Mrs. Clinton waited at the door to accompany Lady Edith, all smiles and complaisance, while Mr. Clinton, wearing a white neckcloth, so tight that he seemed practising how to bear being gradually suffocated, stood ready to assist them in, smiling vaguely, without uttering a word; and having touched his hat very dubiously, as if not quite sure if his head were on his shoulders or not, when they drove off stood absently mooning for some time, in apparently serious contemplation of his gloves.

Scarcely had the two ladies driven more than a mile, before Lady Edith suddenly recollected that she had not administered to Beatrice a composing draught which had been most anxiously and most emphatically prescribed for her by Dr. McIndre; and having with the greatest difficulty persuaded Mrs. Clinton to let the pony-carriage be turned homewards, she hurriedly re-entered the castle, promising, if Mrs. Clinton would wait two seconds, to return. How

long Mrs. Clinton sat in the carriage it would be difficult to say, though it seemed like hours; but Lady Edith never re-appeared. Everything has its limits, and nothing narrower limits than the patience of a lady waiting in a cold open carriage; therefore Mrs. Clinton at last gave up the point, and drove off alone, wondering much what could have detained her intended companion.

Lady Edith meanwhile almost ran up stairs to Beatrice's room, but was greatly surprised, the door being ajar, to hear, as she approached, several voices engaged apparently in low and earnest conversation. As Dr. McIndre had specially ordered the most unbroken quiet for his patient, the presence of any one individual would have caused her most unbounded amazement; but this intrusion of more than one, seemed to Lady Edith most unaccountable. She remembered now that during the previous day she had found Beatrice on her return from a temporary absence, looking far from refreshed by the period when she was supposed to have been lying perfectly quiet. On that occasion, a deep and permanent flush on the cheek of Beatrice had indicated, by its hectic brilliancy, an alarming accession of fever, the suddenness of which had appeared to Lady Edith quite unaccountable, while there was a blazing brightness in her eyes, very different from their usual expression of deep and tender sensibility.

The voice of Lady Eaglescairn, speaking in low tones of coaxing persuasion, became distinctly audible now to Lady Edith, who felt panic-struck with astonishment at this unjustifiable conduct, as it at once flashed upon her conviction that these daily airings of her own were all arranged with an intention to take advantage of Beatrice being alone to gain access to her room. How such a deception could have gained the connivance of Beatrice, Lady Edith was at a loss to imagine, so contrary was any concealment to the honest frank-hearted child of her adoption, whose nature had no sympathy with the spirit of that superstition which begins by secrecy and ends in deception.

Lady Edith, always open and above-board, as well as very decided herself, resolved at once to test the whole mystery by appearing in person. Hitherto the tone of Lady Eaglescairn's voice and of her companion, whoever he might be, had continued quite inaudible; but suddenly Lady Edith's whole heart was moved by the most intense emotion, when she heard the clear, young, silvery voice of Beatrice, in reply to some observation of Lady Eaglescairn's, exclaim in a tone of mournful earnestness:—

"I should not deserve to breathe the breath of life another hour, Lady Eaglescairn, if for one brief moment I could conceive it possible to give up Aunt Edith, to break her heart, and to forsake her faith! To that kind benefactress I owe much more than life; and may life itself depart from me before I forget it. Her religion is mine. For its principles and for her I am ready to relinquish every thing in existence, or even existence itself."

"We must give you time," replied Lady Eaglescairn, in a caressing tone; "Rome was not built in a day, and no more can the Roman Catholic faith be embraced in an hour; but there can be no harm in your hearing what we have to urge. As my exemplary friend Mrs. Lorraine long since informed you, mine is no ordinary offer. My son's affections are devotedly yours, but not our consent while you remain a heretic. But I can give you a name of your own that would make your alliance an honour to him; I can at a single sentence, and I will, if you say that word, produce a transformation from your present miserable state of dependence as an anonymous foundling, to one of the highest condition in this country. Now or never is your time, then, to choose rank, fortune, distinction, and every earthly luxury, or to cast them away, never to be recalled. Consider!"

"Lady Eaglescairn," replied Beatrice, in a tone faint and low from extreme emotion, "your offer requires no consideration; it never did. The difference of religion is one for which many have died—for which I am ready to forfeit all. It is with sorrow that I do so, but with no hesitation. Under Aunt Edith I have never known what you speak of—'a miserable dependence.' Oh no! never one momentary annoyance that she could save me. Never! How much rather I would suffer any trial than ever hurt her kind and generous feelings!"

Lady Eaglescairn's attention was at this moment attracted by a slight sound, and looking hurriedly up, she saw before her the calm and mournful countenance of Lady Edith, with tears of very solemn emotion filling her expressive eyes, while she silently contemplated the scene before her. Beatrice, who had not yet perceived the entrance of her aged friend, was lying back on the pillow, a burning hectic glowing on her cheek, and her large lustrous eyes looking upwards with a glance of intense devotion,—which appeared in that lovely young countenance almost sublime,—so pure, so angelic that she seemed scarcely a being of earthly mould. Lady Eaglescairn had taken her hand, which she still held, with a look intended to be affectionate, and beside her sat an individual with his arms folded, his head down, and his whole face concealed; but when the entrance of Lady Edith caused him to look up, she with increased astonishment recognised Father Ambrose. A long silence ensued on all sides; but Lady Edith, having advanced to the bedside and kissed Beatrice, who gave her a faint smile of gratified affection, then turned to Father Ambrose, and said, in a tone of calm determination, "I need only point to that fevered countenance as a sufficient reason for requesting the absence of all strangers. Lady Eaglescairn, you are now doing what your own dreadful religion inculcates as a duty. That creed enjoins you, at every sacrifice of honour, hospitality, or kindness, to make proselytes. I forgive this attempt the more readily, as a kind Providence has rendered it unsuccessful. This is no time, however, for discussion,

as my Beatrice requires rest and composure. It is at the risk of her life that she has been thus agitated; let me therefore close the curtains now, and remain with her alone."

A strange, almost triumphant smile gleamed in the eyes of Mr. Ambrose, as with a courteous bow to Lady Edith, he stealthily, silently, but rapidly disappeared out of the room; and Lady Eagle-scairn seemed quite absorbed in the occupation of removing a speck of dust from her dress as she slowly followed, muttering to herself, "If my son should die of the disappointment, he never shall marry that girl while she adheres to Lady Edith. Never! Yet what may be the fatal consequences to us all if he does not!"

Lady Edith's attachment to Beatrice was the exalted affection of a powerful mind without one thought for herself; but in the silence and darkness of her long attendance in the sick-room, she had ample time to meditate on her own difficult position, living within the very house of those whom she had detected in a design to steal from her the affections of one dearer to her than life, and who were united in a yet worse conspiracy to estrange her adopted child from the sacred truths in which she had been so carefully instructed. Had Beatrice been less firm in her faith and affections, so that Lady Edith had found herself cheated of the dear girl's attachment, she must have sunk beneath the blow; for she could not have lived to witness Beatrice becoming, like Allan, a convert to that superstition which destroys the happiness of its victims, prostrates their intellects, cramps their liberty, and perverts their whole sense of duty; but now Lady Edith reaped the benefit of having strengthened the understanding of her young pupil, so that the little trumpery affections and impersonations of a false faith offered no enticements to her, and Beatrice had a mind to which beads, dolls, and perfumes presented no attractions.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Remind me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved and vanish'd hours,
When all my soul was given to thee;—
Hours that may never be forgot,
Till time unnerves our vital powers,
And thou and I shall cease to be."—BYRON.

THERE are times in the experience of every mortal when all things in life seem to run contrary to their wishes and hopes, when nothing on earth goes upon castors, and when even those most known and beloved in the world appear all combined to disappoint every sanguine expectation of happiness. During several days following the first attack of indisposition, the young and unbroken constitution of Beatrice was evidently conquering her bodily illness:

but Lady Edith became astonished to perceive that her beloved charge, instead of becoming more composed by the gradual effect of time, grew much more agitated and excitable. The slightest noise startled her and brought a flood of scarlet to her cheek. To Lady Edith, meanwhile, her manner became not only more tenderly affectionate than ever, but there appeared in it a degree of nervous and demonstrative excitement, very different from their usual quiet matter-of-fact intercourse. Beatrice often leaned her head now on the shoulder of Lady Edith, or clasped Lady Edith's hand in her own, while tears, wrung from her evidently by the deepest anguish, sprang into her eyes; and there seemed in her manner a sort of remorseful gratitude, a sort of sympathising concern for Lady Edith herself, as if some undeveloped misfortune were impending over her benefactress, which could be neither averted nor explained.

On mentioning this circumstance to Lord Iona, he expressed the most anxious solicitude that Lady Edith would probe it to the very bottom, as he evidently saw there was some scheme in agitation, which his father was under promise to conceal, and which eluded all his efforts to discover; and Lady Edith, in consequence, observing Beatrice one day unusually revived in bodily strength, but greatly depressed in mind, unable longer to postpone her anxiety, said with an expression of affectionate reproach, "My dear Beatrice! something weighs down your spirits to the very earth, yet I—once your only friend—must watch in silent suspense, without being told what your sorrow is! My dear child, why are not our hearts one as in happier days? Formerly, my aged experience could assist you, while your joyous affection enlivened me. This would have been a wide and empty world to me without you! Who but yourself could have cheered my broken heart and prompted my anxious prayers? Now, dear Beatrice, your health and spirits are extinct, and why? I like direct answers, therefore give me one now. Can any secret be a right one which must not be confided to your oldest and best friend? I deserve your entire confidence, and none can be your true friends who would deprive me of it."

Beatrice hurriedly snatched Lady Edith's extended hand in her own, clasped it to her lips, and drenched it with tears, which rolled unheeded down her cheek; but in this burst of passionate emotion, she did not or could not articulate a word, and Lady Edith, having waited some moments in anxious suspense, mournfully added, while observing with astonishment the convulsive working of that beautiful young countenance,—

"This all seems to me a painful, an incredible dream. You cannot wonder, dear Beatrice, if I feel bewildered, agitated, almost irritated, by seeing you, my child, as you are now. I have read in old books of Popish intrigues, but that fears and uncertainties, such as now oppress me, should ever come into my own neighbourhood, into my own home, into my own heart, Beatrice, into my very deepest affections, is overwhelming. We seem in a new world

now! During my own youth all was fair, open, and above-board. Then there was no masquerading, but all knew what were the faith and feelings of all with whom they were intimate; but now, young people approach those they love and ought to trust, with a mask over their very hearts. Be open with your old friend, Beatrice!" exclaimed Lady Edith, her own strong mind for once giving way; and covering her face with her hands, she wept, saying in accents of trembling anxiety,—“What is the spell over you? Say something, Beatrice, as a guide to my fears! Anything would be a relief. Every evil that can possibly befall my child presents itself by turns before my thoughts. Let me but know that there is only one distinct evil, and great as that may be, I can bear it. Am I still to grope on in total darkness about you, Beatrice,—sometimes indignant that you should be betrayed into withdrawing your confidence from one who loves you as I do,—sometimes fearing that you have been ensnared by some network of deceit, from which none can deliver you. Speak, my own beloved Beatrice, and say—whatever you can say.”

“It will break my heart if you are so kind,” said Beatrice, while tears fell in torrents from her eyes, and dropped on the floor. Her whole expression and attitude indicated the very prostration of helpless sorrow, and the entire energy of her soul seemed extinct. Lady Edith gazed at the pallid face before her, with a look of interrogatory anxiety, which became gradually one of deepening apprehension, and of increasing anguish. Beatrice was no ordinary girl in respect to the promptitude and decision of her energetic mind; but now there was no vigour even in her grief. It seemed to Lady Edith like the helpless abandonment of one who could but suffer and die. A few short weeks before, and who had ever appeared in a more brilliant flush of health and happiness, fervent in her affections, keen in her enjoyments, gay in her anticipations, useful in her employments, and open as the light of day in all her happy thoughts; but now the Papal blight seemed upon her, and Lady Edith, after gazing some moments at the beautiful wreck, mournfully closed her own eyes in silent anxious prayer for help and direction how to act.

“Aunt Edith,” at length faltered Beatrice feebly, but most affectionately resting her forehead on the shoulder of her much-loved benefactress, “my best of all advisers and friends, I need your prayers, and believe me I deserve them as much as I ever did, perhaps more. If I were now speaking to you across my own open grave I could not feel more overawed by my present circumstances. Were I doing wrong, could I—dare I look my benefactress in the face, and ask you, as I now do, to pray for me? From you, Aunt Edith, I never failed to find comfort—oh! give me now the consolation of saying you still can trust in my entire affection—that you still can trust in the efficacy of your own former teaching to preserve me from wilful deceit. Appearances are all wrong,

but if you could read my heart, dear Aunt Edith, you would see that a duty binds me to silence besides a promise. Feel how my forehead burns with agitation. Does it not scorch you? My circumstances are at present frightfully changed—my heart is not."

Lady Edith silently but most mournfully embraced the agitated girl. Her hands were burning, her face was lividly pale, and she trembled visibly. After a thoughtful pause of several minutes, Lady Edith said in a tone of very solemn affection,

"You are not, I see, to blame, Beatrice,—but others are. Who could in fairness tell a young thing like you any secret so important as to wither the bloom off your cheek as I see it now, and yet forbid you the comfort of consulting your oldest, and I need not say your truest friend? That which avoids the light must be evil. I can implicitly trust in your good intentions, my child, but your young judgment may err. It has already erred in giving that promise, but once given—once solemnly pledged—let me not be the person who would ask or wish you to break it. From my earliest years I never was troubled with idle curiosity, and less than ever now. Be very wary, my dearest girl, for yours is the credulity natural to one who has herself no guile. Remember you stand alone in the world, without one legal protector, and therefore protect yourself. The motto of Romanism is 'Mystery, mystery, mystery;' and there is about Mr. Ambrose a deep inscrutable darkness never to be fathomed. Do not trust him. Dear Beatrice, above all men on earth distrust that deep and bad man. Whatever happens recollect that nothing can ever alter my affection, or diminish my fervent desire to serve you. By my prayers I can do so now, and perhaps hereafter by my efforts."

They were clasped in each other's arms with a fervent embrace—these two so devotedly attached to each other, but neither spoke. Hours flew past while Lady Edith afterwards sat immovable by the bedside of her beloved young invalid, her own heart swelling with suppressed emotion. She at length cautiously looked within the curtains; Beatrice lay wide awake, and it seemed as if she were engaged in silent prayer. Those prayers could not be more earnest and persevering than Lady Edith's, who felt how sadly strange it was that for the first time, while yet gazing in each other's faces with unchanged affection, an insuperable barrier divided their thoughts.

"We look at each other now as of old, and yet what a change!" said Lady Edith, sadly, "neither now dare tell the other all she thinks. I can but wish for my Beatrice the fulfilment of all her own desires, knowing they will certainly be right and good; not mere happiness in the common estimate, Beatrice, but the happiness of devoted piety, of moderate desires, of peaceful contentment, of much to enjoy, and of much also to bestow, in works of usefulness, charity, and kindness."

"Long, long may these be yours, Aunt Edith!" exclaimed Beatrice fervently, clasping the hand of her benefactress, while it be-

came obvious that a deep conflict was agitating her young mind, too sadly betrayed by the tremulousness of her lip. "To enjoy is mine no longer—it perhaps may never be again. Our old cherished dreams of open-hearted peace and unreserved confidence have ended in a sad, sad awakening!"

Beatrice, burying her face in her hands, rested them on her knees, and wept convulsively, swaying her body slightly backwards and forwards, with an expression of passionate grief greater than any circumstance within Lady Edith's wildest conjectures could account for, and while she trembled for what the mystery might be, already attended with such calamitous results, she felt how truly it is the case that the dearer our ties are to life, the more we have to suffer.

Lord Iona meanwhile watched as unwearingly as ever a deer-stalker watched for his prey, to catch a glimpse of Beatrice, till at length he gained intelligence, through the vigilance of his valet, that she had obtained from Dr. McIndre permission to pass an hour in the library; therefore, summoning all his courage, he resolved, *coute qui coute*, to snatch an interview with the object of all his affections and thoughts. Affecting to suppose the library as usual quite untenanted, Lord Iona, on entering, though with flushed cheek and eager eye, assumed a careless, whistling, off-hand manner, as if he had merely dropped in to search for a book; but on turning to the sofa on which Beatrice reclined, with Lady Edith seated by her side, he could not restrain a burst of passionate emotion and fervent delight on meeting her once again. Never had Beatrice looked so lovely, with the delicate languor of indisposition in her countenance, and yet a look of shy, fluttering pleasure, as he approached; and Lord Iona sanguinely hoped that in time he might become as dear to her as she already was to him. In a voice faltering with extreme emotion he mustered presence of mind enough at last to speak, saying,

"I need not tell you, Miss Farinelli, for you know it, how happy, how more than happy I am that you are restored to us again," said Lord Iona, approaching her with an air of the most respectful animation, "the fact is, in short, that my whole mind is turned topsyturvy with joy, and though I wish to be on my best, my very best behaviour on this occasion, yet positively I want words to express half the energy of my delight. Speak one word to me, and say that my presence here is not an unwelcome intrusion! I shall detest myself for ever, if you have been disturbed by my appearance here."

The vivid carnation which dyed the cheek of Beatrice could not have been matched by any rose in the conservatory, as she smilingly held out her hand to Lord Iona, and accepted a beautiful bouquet, which he professed to have accidentally gathered during an idle hour that morning in the greenhouse. It was with a wonderful effort of taste and genius that he had combined all the most beau-

liful hues and rarest plants into one splendid mosaic, which might have done honour to a flower-show, and with unmitigated delight that he watched her examining each plant in evident enjoyment, while she smilingly turned to him, saying—

“I am voting you a prodigious grant of gratitude for this considerate attention. To a convalescent invalid like myself, these fresh bright blossoms seem a joyous welcome back to life and health.”

“If I have given you a pleasure, then let it be written on my tombstone, ‘J’ai veçu!’” exclaimed Lord Iona enthusiastically.—“That lily of the valley I picked as an emblem of yourself; but what are the points of resemblance deponent saith not. Those tawdry tulips, with neither honey nor perfume, represent Miss Turton; and those scarlet berries of the deadly nightshade, Father Eustace. Positively that man is getting a sort of condemned-cell aspect that frightens one! I merely asked him where Bessie McRonald was, that she might take a message for me to my mother, and he scowled under those deep dark pent-house eyebrows of his, as if I had purposely insulted him. She confesses to him every morning, and therefore why should he not know her whereabouts afterwards? That poor girl is now driven rapidly on to her ruin by the powerful machinery of superstition, which no papist can resist any more than I could resist the inexorable doom of fate.”

“Where can they have taken her?” exclaimed Beatrice, in a tone of almost agonized interest; “poor Bessie! She has forsaken her own peaceful, happy, inviolable home, to pursue the merest bubble that ever danced in a sunbeam. What a happy lot hers should have been, and how wretched it is now! Can nothing be done to rescue the poor girl?”

“Have you no clue by which to trace her?” asked Lord Iona, reflectively. “My mother always changes the subject now when she is named, and Father Eustace drops it like a hot chestnut. His olive complexion becomes darker, and his eye more stern, when I sometimes jestingly inquire for McRonald’s niece, which the old man requested me occasionally to do. I believe Father Eustace suspects that I have accepted in my father’s own house the honourable post of a Protestant spy.”

For some days Lady Edith had the strength of mind to refrain from alluding to any subject connected with those which so greatly agitated Beatrice, and was more than rewarded by seeing her bodily strength gradually revive, and a lovely tinge of bloom again on her cheek. At length, observing her one morning unusually well, Lady Edith asked whether there could be any harm in her asking Mr. Ambrose himself to explain what were the secret circumstances relating to Beatrice which he professed to know, and she was pleased to perceive the glow of pleasure with which her young favourite entreated her to do so, saying it would be the greatest of comforts to her if all could be at once declared, and that she hoped

Mr. Ambrose might feel it impossible to refuse so very reasonable a demand.

Lady Edith was not one who ever postponed a good resolution, and the very next time she saw Mr. Ambrose, accompanied by Sir Allan and Lady Eaglescairn, after exchanging a few words of ordinary courtesy, she said in that gentle voice which was music itself, but which now trembled with anxiety,—“Let me intrude upon your more than common attention, Mr. Ambrose, by requesting an explanation very important to myself. Till this month I have had as entirely the confidence of my young Beatrice as you have of your nephew; but very recently, for the first time in her life, she has become reserved to me on one subject, and attributes that most unusual reserve to your injunctions. I ask, therefore, in the presence of Sir Allan and Lady Eaglescairn, by what right you exercise any secret influence over a girl whom you scarcely know? By what right, Mr. Ambrose, do you suddenly place yourself between me and the child of my adoption, who cannot remember one hour of her life till now, during which we were not of one mind and of one heart?”

Lady Edith stopped, for her voice refused its office; and Sir Allan, after giving a glance of respectful sympathy, or rather of sorrowful commiseration, fixed his large eyes on Mr. Ambrose with an intensity of interest, as if he would have looked through the depths of such a mind as Mr. Ambrose's? His colour remained unaltered, his eye perfectly calm, and his voice as bland as ever, while apparently occupied in laboriously cutting up the pages of a new book, and cheerfully answering,—

“My very dear Madam, we all know the obligations of Miss Farinelli to your brother's memory, and that for his sake you befriended her while she needed friends. Reasons of paramount importance prevent me from explaining myself fully at present; but I have discovered her family in Spain, and she will very soon be no longer dependent on the bounty of a generous benefactress, who can perhaps ill afford a longer trespass on her liberality.”

“What I can afford need be no subject of consideration, Mr. Ambrose, to any one but myself. Between Beatrice and me it never was thought of—never named till this moment. Your civilities now remind me of those who used to poison their enemies with perfumed gloves and sugarplums. Setting aside, therefore, entirely what needs no comment,—what proof has Beatrice, or any one interested for her, that you have, as you mention, discovered her real connexions?”

“Perhaps, Lady Eaglescairn, you will testify for me that I am no impostor,” said Mr. Ambrose, assuming a light joëular tone and a look of humorous gravity, though his eyes flashed fire for a moment; “Allan, say one word for your uncle, ‘honest, sober, and trustworthy.’”

“Mr. Ambrose,” said Lady Edith, in a low earnest voice, for she

was thoroughly alarmed by observing that the countenance of Sir Allan had become deeply depressed while he fixed his eye on herself with a look of affectionate compassion for which it was impossible to account, "you have a legitimate right to the influence you assume over Sir Allan, being your own nephew; but what is your right to become first in the confidence of my adopted child?"

"If we come to talk of rights in relation to Miss Farinelli, neither you nor I, Lady Edith, have any legal claim over her," answered Mr. Ambrose, speaking in a slow determined voice, which sounded deep and solemn like a cathedral bell, while Sir Allan, with an agitated step, hurried to the window as if unable to control what he would have said in support of Lady Edith. "There are circumstances connected with that interesting foundling not at present to be fully explained. As to the propriety of some disclosures being made to her, and not to others, I have satisfied Lady Eaglescain, in whose house she is a guest, and therefore of course, under her protection now. Allan also knows all, and approves —"

For a moment the young Chief looked startled and perplexed at this evidently unexpected appeal to himself. He glanced doubtfully first at Mr. Ambrose, and then at Lady Edith, who sat pale as death with astonishment and perplexity. Sir Allan hesitated, and was about to speak, when the powerful eye of his uncle became fastened upon him, and seemed to claim implicit obedience. Then the light of intellectual energy became gradually extinguished in Sir Allan's countenance, his looks became vaguely fixed on the ground, and he remained silent while Mr. Ambrose said to him in a commanding tone, "You surely remember that interesting narrative I gave you in the summer-house this morning!"

"Allan," said Lady Edith, in a low agitated voice, and with a penetrating look, "was the secret of Mr. Ambrose one that you thought Beatrice should act upon without any advice from those she is accustomed to consult?"

Sir Allan attempted to reply, but the words died on his lips, and a deep scarlet stain burned on his cheeks. He appeared evidently under a perfect prostration of distress and perplexity; but the vow of obedience seemed upon him, for he made no sign, and turned mournfully away, unable even to look up; but as it by no means suited Mr. Ambrose's convenience to be affronted at what Lady Edith said, he was not, and looked as if she had spoken what was unwelcome in an unknown tongue.

Lady Edith with an air of dignified resignation now slowly rose to leave the room, and gave as she did so one deliberate look at each of the countenances present. Lady Eaglescain, with a slight accession of colour, had resumed her usual look of empty self-importance, and occupied herself in laboriously drawing on and buttoning a pair of very tight gloves. Sir Allan was leaning his head on the window-sill in an attitude of apparently hopeless depression, and Mr. Ambrose, who had such a fund of civility that he found

some even to spare for Lady Edith, wore his most polite and submissive smile. He opened the door, as she withdrew, and bowed her out of the room with an expression of the most unlimited respect, and looking as if he had really granted every wish of her heart.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"They sought her with in bow'r and ha',
The lady was not seen."—SCOTT.

"Alack, now, that all the world should be out sight-seeing and saint-making, and we laid up here, like two lame jack-daws in a belfry!"—*Saints' Tragedy.*

NIGHT and morning Lady Edith was determining to set off with Beatrice from the cold and stately halls of Eaglescain to their own little peaceful warm-hearted home, but night and morning found her yet a most unwilling prisoner in the gloomy Castle of Eaglescain, where the cold, proud, tranquil incivility of its hostess became every day more intolerably galling to one like Lady Edith, who lived but for the exchange of kind affections and friendly good offices. She had now learned so to distrust Mr. Ambrose that she would not even have had an honest-hearted quarrel with him about his clandestine conduct respecting Beatrice. One morning Lady Edith found a note from him dropped accidentally on the floor, which enclosed her young *protégée* the loan of a relic, to be placed under her pillow. It was a finger-bone of St. Alphonso Liguori, preserved in a purple velvet bag, richly embroidered with pearls, and also a fragment of the coal used to burn St. Lorenzo. Mr. Ambrose in his note informed Beatrice, that "when St. Francis of the Reformed Franciscan order was attacked once by violent rheumatic pains, which daily increased until the physicians pronounced that he had not long to survive, he had placed this relic on his breast, saying,—'If thou, Liguori, art really in heaven, deliver me from this death;'^{*} and as soon as he had spoken these words he fell into a calm sleep, and awoke perfectly cured." Mr. Ambrose, in his note, proceeded to intimate, that if Beatrice recovered from her present illness, she must consider it a special miracle worked by this precious relic, and, in gratitude to his Church, dedicate her remaining days to its service; as a preliminary to which he requested, almost in a tone of command, that she would receive his visits daily for the discussion of affairs to which he need not more particularly advert.

"My dear Aunt Edith," said Beatrice, after she received this strange note from her benefactress, "can there be rational persons,

* Liguori's Life, p. 54.

born and educated like ourselves, who are enticed into a Church where such trash is seriously taught, and such men are actually canonized? No wonder that Romanism has been called the parent of atheism."

"In the early Church," replied Lady Edith, "men were called saints on the same principle on which every clergyman is now 'The Reverend,' and every Bishop 'Right Reverend,' whether appropriate to their actual characters or not. Such saints as are described in old Popish books are mere nonentities of the imagination—mere wild chimeras of a heated brain; and when devotees are expected to believe their miracles as devoutly as those of Holy Scripture, their whole faith is generally thrown overboard, and they become infidels."

"Lady Eaglescain read me lately, with enthusiastic delight, her favourite passage from the 'Flowerets of St. Francis,' by Cardinal Bonaventure, which might, as Lord Iona remarked, have outdone the Arabian Nights," continued Beatrice: "it asserted that the birds hung motionless in the air, or rested upon the boughs, to hear the Saint's words, and would not depart till they received his benediction."

"How perfectly credible!" said Lady Edith ironically; "and when St. Pacificus, who was canonized by a Cardinal in 1839, walked abroad, neither rain nor snow fell upon him, nor were his feet ever touched or soiled by the mud upon the roads, while his companions were obliged to change their habits, drenched by rain that had fallen during their journey. Beatrice, my very dear girl, it is well for us to fortify our minds by a timely study of the end to which Romanism leads, for once beguiled within the vortex of that strange whirlpool, there seem no limits to the infatuation that gradually warps the mind. Fables fit only to amuse the Italian donkey-boys, take gradual possession of minds once enlightened by education; and I see former friends of my own now professing to believe in legends, compared with which that of Androcles and the Lion is a mere matter-of-course."

"Many in this house are certainly 'under strong delusion to believe a lie,'" said Beatrice, meditatively. "They are priest-ridden dupes, obliged to believe that the grass is red, if ordered to do so; till, at last, nothing is beyond the limit of their credulity. A child of eight years old could scarcely be got to credit the story Lady Eaglescain told me of St. Veronica at four. She assured me, that when a pilgrim begged an alms, this juvenile saint, not knowing what else to give, took off a pair of new shoes she had recently put on, and gave them to him. This act was so pleasing to God, that one of the shoes having stuck fast on an arch over the doorway, the pilgrim supernaturally rose to more than human height to reach it down; and the Virgin Mary appeared soon after to St. Veronica, with the shoes in her hand, both shining richly in jewels, and told her that she had herself personated the pilgrim to

receive them. Such is the religion to which those priests would convert me, if they could, Aunt Edith; but, thanks to a kind Protestant benefactress, while life and sense remain, your pupil is safe from all the wiles of a Church where pardons are bought and sold at a marketable value, and where bowing and genuflexions to the altar and priest are substituted for moral obedience to God himself. Could any courtier hope to obtain a pension and title merely by prostrations? A loyal subject, while paying all due attention to established etiquette, doing all that is right and usual in the presence of a sovereign, could never hope to improve his reception by introducing, at his own discretion, forms and ceremonies from the court of China."

"Yet there are such wrongheaded samples of humanity, who waste the noble energies of their intellect in a blind, headlong obedience to the most crushing and arbitrary authority on the earth, which chills the intellect of individuals like a palsy; but we must spurn at every enticement of the senses, to keep our faith untarnished in the holy light of Scripture."

Lady Edith felt, by this confidential discussion, much reassured against all apprehensions respecting any intrigues to subvert the faith of Beatrice; who succeeded, with a generous hypocrisy, in looking so cheerful, that it seemed as if nothing remained to weigh down her usually animated spirit. It was a pleasant illusion; and the day at last came when Dr. M'Indre assured Lady Edith that her precious invalid might be removed with perfect safety to Heatherbrae, as the change would, in fact, be very salutary.

Little as Lady Edith relished applying to any one for a favour in that house, she found it necessary to ask Lady Eaglescain for the loan of her close carriage, that the young invalid might be conveyed home without danger of cold. To her great perplexity, her hostess, generally cold and dignified as a statue, looked much confused when she spoke; and there followed such an interchange of curtsies and civilities between the two ladies, as had never taken place before, though it all ended in Lady Eaglescain politely regretting to say that her chariot had been sent to the pier, five miles off, in the morning, where a foreign lady of distinction and her suite were expected that day to land. "But," she added, eagerly, returning to her employment of drawing plans for encaustic tiles, "if you will accept the pony-carriage for yourself immediately, Lady Edith, I promise to bring our dear invalid to Heatherbrae to-morrow, should she wish to leave us."

At this moment, Father Eustace entered, with his usual long, stealthy step, his head bent down, and his wonted expression of dismal solemnity; while he glided into a chair, with a diffident, hesitating, cautious glance, as if he expected it would be snatched from under him. Lady Edith could not but think he would have been a perfect study for any good actor representing the Tartuffe,—or, rather, he seemed to her like a jester performing sanctity in

burlesque; and yet there was a deep, sharp, inquisitorial expression in his eye, when for a moment he raised it from the ground, where that eye in general remained immovably cast down beneath the half-closed lid. Lady Edith shrank from the priest as she would have done from the sting of a serpent; and there was a curious contrast, certainly, now between his affected humility and his boundless authority in that old castle; while he evidently had a dreadful pleasure in the exercise of his extraordinary genius for intrigue, and in considering all around him as mere puppets to be wound up, or wound down, at his own supreme will.

Something in the tone and manner of Lady Eaglescain boded, to the quick ear of Lady Edith, no good. Her hostess could not stand being face to face, and eye to eye with her, but appeared to veil some concealed, evasive meaning in all she said—except one meaning, which was plain enough—that her guest was expected to depart, on that day, alone. To leave Beatrice behind for a single hour was out of the question; therefore Lady Edith at once politely intimated her fixed resolution to wait until Beatrice could be ready to move, even if she had to wait a week longer.

Father Eustace shot a glance at Lady Eaglescain of warning or admonition, while he turned over the rustling sheets of a newspaper, as if absorbed in politics; and Lady Eaglescain, looking much perplexed at this claim on her hospitality, remained silent.

There was a quiet firmness and dignity in Lady Edith's manner, very superior to the mere fine-ladyism of Lady Eaglescain, who looked anxiously on Father Eustace, and his eyes remained on the ground. At length, Lady Eaglescain, after having appeared for some time intent on matching a thread of crimson Berlin wool, felt obliged to say something, and exclaimed, "What a misfortune it is not to have more carriages! I am quite grieved, Lady Edith!—Where are my gloves?—I am quite vexed and annoyed. Have you got the 'Morning Post,' Father Eustace?"

It became perfectly obvious that no close carriage was to be forthcoming that day for the conveyance of Beatrice; therefore Lady Edith, politely repeating her hope that next morning they might be kindly favoured with the use of one, rose, with her usual quiet grace of manner, and slowly withdrew.

As Lady Edith opened the door, she was surprised, and almost startled, to meet Mr. Clinton entering Lady Eaglescain's boudoir. He carried in his hand a box of metallic colours, and a large portfolio, containing sheets of glass, on which Father Eustace was teaching him and Lady Eaglescain to paint some legendary subject for an eastern window to be placed in his own little chapel. By means of these lessons, and the planning of encaustic tiles, Lady Eaglescain had found an outlet for all her spare time and thoughts; while with Mr. Clinton and Father Eustace she pored over the lives of Romish saints, in search of subjects for her brush. While Father Eustace taught his zealous pupils to copy missals and brasses, and

to study all the mysteries of rubrical or legendary antiquity he talked, with sententious learning, of rood screens, stone-altars, albs, copes, tunicles, eagles, ambos, and lecterns, till their minds were in a whirl, like any kaleidoscope.

“A lip of lies, a face form'd to conceal,
And without feeling, mock at all who feel;
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown,
A cheek of parchment and an eye of stone.”—*Byron.*

Lady Eaglescairn's carriage stood before the gateway next morning, at the hour appointed by Lady Edith, all her own baggage having been placed there; but Lord Eaglescairn's servants appeared most unaccountably to have overlooked that of Beatrice, which stood ready packed in her room. Miss Farinelli had actively arranged it all herself in the morning, in the full anticipation of going home; but, nevertheless, Lady Edith observed a tremulous hurry in her manner, and a burning hectic on her cheek, which unmistakeably indicated an extraordinary degree of suppressed agitation. Beatrice was, if that had been possible, more than usually affectionate in manner to her anxiously observant benefactress, who, nevertheless, fancied that she traced in the tone of her voice an almost compassionate melancholy, which amazed and perplexed her. Their whole intercourse now gave Lady Edith a vague feeling of apprehension, as if Beatrice knew of some great but inevitable misfortune about to befall them both; and yet how could it be! Though Lady Edith had not forgotten the remark of Junius, that a priest's resentment is implacable, yet she apprehended nothing from Father Eustace; and in the whole wide circuit of her conjectures, could imagine nothing sufficiently agitating to account for the perfect agony of tenderness with which Beatrice had embraced her when they met in the morning, and which still thrilled in her voice, as well as spoke in her tearful eyes.

“When we get home,” thought Lady Edith, cheerfully, “no mysteries are acted there: all is free and open as Heaven's own light. Those who have stolen from me the confidence of my own child here, cannot follow me there. Lady Eaglescairn must see, from what I said yesterday, that priestly intriguers need expect no admission to my little home of simple habits, and of simple, unadorned faith,—a home of peace, without manœuvres, mysteries, or cabals, where life passes according to the plainest dictates of nature and of Divine grace.”

Lady Edith had been impatient to set off during some time, waiting for Beatrice, when it suddenly struck her as very surprising what could be thus delaying her usually punctual companion, who had been evidently anxious herself to escape as early as possible from Eaglescairn Castle. Finding from her watch that it was already long after the hour, and her own impatience making it seem double the time, Lady Edith threaded her way through the long

passages to Beatrice's apartment, whom she had so little doubt of finding there, that she spoke while opening the door—but Lady Edith's words seemed to come back as an empty echo. No one was there, and though the baggage of Beatrice was packed, it lay untouched on the floor.

When Lady Edith stood alone in the vacant room, a sense of unaccountable apprehension suddenly came over her. Why was Beatrice absent so long, and where had she gone? Dr. McIndre had thought it almost too great a risk of fatigue if she ventured down stairs at all, and had with the greatest hesitation consented that she should attempt to drive to Heatherbrae. That she had left her room, therefore, without Lady Edith was surprising, and still more so that she remained long absent. Beatrice had jestingly said that very morning, in pronouncing a jocular panegyric on herself, that if all the time she had ever in her life kept anybody waiting were thrown together it would not make ten minutes, and here she was keeping Lady Eaglescain's carriage at the door nearly an hour.

Lady Edith sat anxiously down to watch for the return of Beatrice, who must, she thought, be detained in the grand exclusive boudoir of Lady Eaglescain, there to take a more friendly leave than in the drawing-room would be vouchsafed to herself. Lady Eaglescain was a great giver of small presents, and Lady Edith saw before her mind's eye the little painted paper-cutter or cardboard work-box she would probably give as a mark of everlasting friendship and patronage to Beatrice, after having elaborately displayed to her all the splendours of her own magnificent jewel-box. Lady Edith amusing her weariness thus with an imaginary sketch of Lady Eaglescain's pompous farewell, seated herself almost absently in the window of her own room, gazing at the chapel. Every window now glittered in the golden tints of a noon-day sun, and the long row of massy cedars which led up to the porch cast a grand and solemn shade, "a dim religious light" over the beautiful building. A little bell, that scarcely sounded louder than a sheep-bell, tinkled in the breeze—that cruel bell which had before summoned her to the same unfortunate window from which she had seen Allan supported to chapel; and now Lady Edith glanced around, when suddenly her almost incredulous eyes fell upon the figure of Beatrice, walking feebly along the same path, towards the same chapel, and leaning for support on the arm of Mr. Ambrose, while Father Eustace followed with Lord Eaglescain, now supposed to be convalescent, though a corpse could scarcely have looked less alive than he.

Lady Edith sprung from her seat in an agony of astonishment and alarm. Any burst of sudden emotion was most unusual to her, but now in an irresistible paroxysm of perplexity she clasped her hands together, while the whole blood of her body seemed rushing up into her face and throat. Scarcely pausing to see the procession, which

was joined by Lady Eaglescairn, enter by the vestry door, Lady Edith was in a moment on their track. She almost flew to overtake the party, but in vain, and when she had reached the gate it had been closed in her face and locked. Lady Edith struggled almost frantically to open it, but without success; she then called for help, but no ear seemed to listen, for all around was still and silent as death.

Strong and calm as the mind of Lady Edith usually was, it now seemed to give way, for she covered her face with her hands, overborne by the suddenness of a shock which almost took from her all power of recollection, and bewildered her with a perplexity what to think, and still more what to do. Until now, Lady Edith had always been able to trace out a clear line of duty, and had death itself been the penalty she could have bravely followed in the path; but here she felt bewildered in a mesh of little intrigues and little secrets not to be explained or understood, though threatening apparently all in life that she held precious upon earth, the affection and even the religious principles of her own beloved Beatrice, dear to her as the memory of her own buried children.

Lady Edith, standing at the chapel-gate, leaned her forehead on the cold iron railing, and though not a tear came to her relief, she remained absorbed in anguish, hearing nothing, seeing nothing, and scarcely conscious of time, as the heavy weight of suspense and anxiety gathered more depth on her lonely heart. A light step approached, but she heard it not till suddenly her hand was clasped in that of another, and on looking up Sir Allan stood before her his eye beaming with all its old expression of respectful affection and kindness. In his smile, nevertheless, there was a fixed sadness far deeper than tears, and several minutes elapsed before either could articulate.

At length Lady Edith, making an effort to compose herself, shortly related all that had occurred during that morning, while Sir Allan listened with a look of burning indignation and sorrow. No sooner had Lady Edith finished her brief and agitated narrative, than he exclaimed with glowing energy, "This must not be, Aunt Edith: you shall see Beatrice instantly. I rashly bound myself to secrecy. I may not speak, but I may act. They have taught me such evasions, and shall take the consequences. I carry a pass-key to this private chapel. You shall enter immediately, if such be your desire. No inducement—no, none whatever, can lead me to desert your interests. I was no party in this affair, and never shall be."

Sir Allan paused not a moment, but threw open the massy gates, and Lady Edith hastily entered by the same low door at which Beatrice had previously disappeared, beside which one of Lord Eaglescairn's servants stood, who ostentatiously crossed himself on seeing a heretic advancing into the chapel. A strong smell of incense, which seemed intoxicating as chloroform, assailed Lady Edith as, approaching the door of an inner apartment, she passed

through the chancel and entered that stone cell wherein she had once observed the prostrate figure of an aged man.

Prepared as she had been for something uncommon, a sight met the view of Lady Edith on advancing into that room, far exceeding her utmost anticipations or her worst fears. Father Eustace stood within the cell, attired in the full costume of his order, a black robe in the form of a toga, with a cross worked in gold on the right breast, his bright black Spanish eyes fixed on Beatrice, who stood trembling beside him, evidently shaken by some deep emotion, while he spoke with vehemence and gesticulation quite unusual even to him. Mr. Ambrose had placed himself before Beatrice, evidently in a state of high excitement, and beside Lord and Lady Eaglescain sat a foreign-looking lady in a conventual costume, the sight of whose countenance startled Lady Edith, engrossed at once her whole attention, and filled her with dismay. Lady Edith's eyes seemed to freeze as she looked at the stranger, her lips became livid, and she stood motionless with consternation, for she saw before her one who was in dress, features, and expression the living realization of that long-cherished miniature which had been restored to Beatrice in her childhood—the very individual in whose arms her young *protégée* had been landed from the wreck.

It burst upon Lady Edith in one frightful shock that her own Beatrice, her adopted foundling, had been claimed by some hitherto unknown Popish relatives; and great was the agitation of Lady Edith when this conjecture first darted into her mind. For a few moments her impulse was, hopefully to consider what proofs of the stranger's identity might be wanting,—that she could resist the evidence unless it were too strong to be impugned; but after Lady Edith had measured the stranger's face, inch by inch, with intense examination, who could deny an unmistakeable likeness to the lady who had been cast ashore from the shipwreck with Beatrice? As the consciousness of this flashed on her conviction, she shivered with grief and agitation. It could be no chance resemblance, and covering her face with her hands, Lady Edith silently smothered a groan of anguish, while she turned away and wept in the sorrowful apprehension that Beatrice might soon be wrenched from her by foreign relatives and priestly guardians.

In respect to the religious creed of that stranger lady, the consecrated place in which Lady Edith had seen her some weeks before, as well as now, left her not a vestige of hope that this relative of Beatrice was otherwise than a Papist, and obviously a very strict one. She looked like the living personification of Vandyke's celebrated portrait representing the dignified abbess of a Spanish convent. The white linen round her forehead, the dark hood over her head, the night-black drapery of her robe hanging in massy folds, the knotted rope round her waist, and the long rosary of richly carved beads, from which a large cross of magnificent diamonds was suspended at her girdle,—the whole figure was a striking

tableau, and exhibited a personage of no ordinary importance; while the dignified expression of her pale countenance, and the commanding stateliness of her whole aspect, proclaimed the stranger accustomed to authority, and very capable of using it; yet she bent down in a semblance of the lowliest humility before Father Eustace, whom she looked at with a reverence amounting almost to adoration.

Lady Edith had entered so noiselessly at the open door of the vestry, that neither she nor Allan attracted any notice at first from the assembled party, whose feelings were evidently at that moment in a state of the most vehement excitement. Mr. Ambrose had ceased to address Beatrice as Lady Edith entered, but Father Eustace took up the subject, saying in a tone of deep and very stern resolution, "Consider well before you answer. More than life depends on your decision."

"It requires no consideration—it never can," replied Beatrice in a low, tremulous, but perfectly decided voice. "I adhere to my own faith, and to my old home."

"Yet you are told, Beatrice Farinelli, as you have hitherto been named, how near are the relatives ready to claim your dutiful affection—that your own mother, ignorant of our language, and believing that not a soul but herself had been saved from the shipwreck, retired to the convent of St. Veronica, under a vow of perpetual penitence, and of a meritorious silence never to be broken, except to her confessor. Through me, then, she now claims your affection and your obedience. Instead of being as hitherto an outcast from every tie of relationship, you are now offered troops of friends, and a position high above them all in rank and fortune. The simple condition is, that you remain in this house to be taught the truth. She cannot and dare not acknowledge a heretic daughter, whose influence must become so great if used against her own faith, her own church, and her own noble family—a family which you may perhaps one day represent. Say, can you hesitate? Does not duty as well as inclination dictate obedience to your only parent? From the moment when you were lost she has remained under a saintly vow of perpetual silence, a penance which she has faithfully kept, to the praise and edification of all who witness it. Never more is her voice to be heard on the earth, till you are converted. Let the voice of filial duty speak in your own heart."

"Why was not I claimed at once? Why have I been left here in ignorance of any such relationship, when my history was known throughout the whole neighbourhood? Surely, even from within the walls of a convent, I might have been traced," said Beatrice in a low trembling whisper. "Through life I have known but one mother and one friend. Whatever I am, she formed me; whatever I know, she taught me; whatever I possess, she gave me. Lady Edith has been all in all to her adopted child, and I cannot give her up."

"You shall!—you must!" exclaimed Father Eustace in a tone of

the most imperious authority, and holding up his finger in a menacing attitude; "I can produce now your late father's will, appointing you to be Lord Eaglescain's ward; therefore, he legally claims you to remain under his guardianship. He can force you to do so. He will make you listen to the teaching of our Church, and disown all who ever taught you otherwise."

"No—no! an hundred times no!" exclaimed Beatrice in low, earnest accents. "Would the first lesson of your Church be to inculcate ingratitude? What is there on earth that I do not owe to my more than mother, my most generous benefactress? Oh, that she could but know all and advise me now—tell me, with her own true judgment, what would be the dictate of religion!"

"Her religion!" muttered Father Eustace, contemptuously between his teeth. "The old heretic! I could willingly thrust her alive into that fire and stamp upon her! Do you persist in adhering to one whom we consider an enemy to truth and to ourselves?"

"Yes," replied Beatrice, with scarcely audible agitation, "I have said it, and need not unnecessarily repeat words which irritate you thus."

At this moment Lady Edith, having overheard the half soliloquy of Father Eustace and his subsequent question, slowly advanced into the middle of the circle, and with unflinching firmness looked steadily at each of the astonished countenances around. To all but the delighted Beatrice, her presence was as unwelcome as it was unexpected, and yet the calm dignity of her expression commanded instant respect. In the silence which followed, no eye but that of Beatrice could meet hers, in which there shone the lofty consciousness of rectitude and truth.

Lady Edith had heard all, as though she heard it not; and having recalled her nearly bewildered senses, she now, with her wonted tranquil grace of manner, walked straight up to Beatrice, and laying her hand on her arm, said in low solemn accents, while every syllable fell singly from her lips in the effort it cost her to speak, "I know all now, my child; I know how deeply you have been tried,—how firmly you have stood. Beatrice, I am at this moment more than rewarded for a lifetime of prayer on your account."

Lady Edith's voice faltered, she bent her head till it rested on the shoulder of Beatrice, and struggled to conceal the overwhelming emotion that choked her utterance. After a short conflict with her feelings, she fixed her eyes on Mr. Ambrose, whose countenance had already resumed its usual imperturbable nothingness of expression, and in a low voice of earnest remonstrance she said, "It would have been unlike the frank and honest character of any Protestant minister to sanction proceedings so clandestine as these; but your Church thinks otherwise. Why am I, always till this hour the guardian of Beatrice, to be excluded from the knowledge of events which seem to involve her whole welfare? That I see before me now, probably, the mother of my adopted child, it is im-

possible to dispute; that face once seen I could not forget; but why, if your intentions be legally right, conceal the facts from me? If anything be for the real good of Beatrice, could I do otherwise than rejoice at it, knowing well that no prosperity can shake her attachment to myself, nor her allegiance to the faith in which we both hope to live and die?"

"Let your attachment to Miss Farinelli be proved now," said Father Eustace contumeliously. He then advanced with his usual noiseless velvet step, while his glittering eyes looked cold as steel at Lady Edith, seeing which, Beatrice cowered closer to her benefactress, while the nervous pressure of her hand upon her arm indicated the agitation she endured. "This young lady, once accidentally thrown into your power, and now discovered by her only parent, is claimed to fill a noble position, for which she was born. While Miss Farinelli continues under the baleful influence of heretics, the proofs that entitle her to rank, fortune, friends, and influence beyond your utmost dreams, shall be withheld. Resign her then entirely, and at once, to a parent who will allow no half-measures. She is entitled by law, as much as by duty, to claim her own daughter."

Beatrice tearfully clasped in her hands the folds of Lady Edith's dress, who threw her own arm round her adopted child with a solemn sadness of manner, more impressively affecting than the keenest burst of anguish, while the affectionately attached girl trembled like a leaf in the blast of autumn. In the progress of a conversation which ensued, the intentions of Father Eustace and of Mr. Ambrose appeared more and more developed, when the astonishing conviction became unavoidable to Lady Edith, that they aimed at nothing less than the immediate and final separation of herself from the child of her whole affections and care. Still, she lost neither her presence of mind nor her dignified composure, but listened with a look of solemn patience to all they said, while Beatrice tightly grasped her arm as if for protection. The more her agitation increased the less outward show did it make, for Beatrice had become still and pale as a corpse, while Father Eustace proceeded in a calm resolute voice to intimate, that as the mother of Beatrice had obtained but a short leave of absence from her convent at present, it was necessary, as a matter of course, that for so brief a period her daughter should remain with her at Eaglescain Castle, to receive through him those communications which owing to her rigid vow of silence, she could not give herself.

Lady Edith listened in dignified attention, but with a penetrating look that made Father Eustace cast down his eyes and become as silent as if he had been a stone statue of himself, and as if his mind had been marble. The presence of Sir Allan became now of importance, because the priests felt it necessary, before an intended proselyte like himself, with much in his power, to moderate the

harshness of their measures. While Beatrice drew her hand across her forehead, evidently bewildered by the scene, Sir Allan stood near her, with his peculiarly long, dark eye-lashes so entirely concealing his eyes, that whether he had any eyes or not might have seemed doubtful; but when the voice of Lady Edith, in attempting to speak, utterly failed, he suddenly looked up with a flashing glance of indignant remonstrance to Father Eustace, which reminded Beatrice of old times, when Allan's heart and mind were allowed to act for themselves, and he exclaimed, "Surely a separation so sudden and so final never can be dreamed of. Lady Edith can remain here also."

"Allan McAlpine, leave all to me," said Mr. Ambrose, laying a hand on the arm of his nephew, and fixing on him that intense and peculiar look which seemed always to command implicit obedience. "Much is due to the life-long attachment of Lady Edith for Miss Farinelli, therefore let an arrangement now be made that they meet occasionally. I cannot doubt that Lady Edith, seeing the claim of filial duty now made on her young favourite, will consent to a short separation, on condition that frequently Miss Farinelli shall be conveyed for an hour to Heatherbrae. There can be no hesitation about a mother's prior claim."

The hard and cruel voice of Mr. Ambrose was studiously softened as he uttered this wily proposition, while Lady Edith listened with dignified astonishment, scarcely believing that her ears were listening to such a suggestion as that of leaving Beatrice behind. If the assembled party had proposed to eat her up alive, she could scarcely have looked more surprised and shocked than at the idea of her adopted child becoming exposed alone to the machinations of such very skilful intriguers; yet, before many minutes Lady Edith found that these were the best terms likely to be offered. The three conspirators, as she considered Mr. Ambrose, Father Eustace, and Lord Eaglescairn, whose countenance had become uncommonly red, looked all contemptuously certain of carrying their point, while the whole soul of Beatrice seemed in her eyes and ears, as she still convulsively riveted her hold of the only friend in that room she could trust.

Lady Edith, seeing an increasing pallor on the countenance of Beatrice, became deeply anxious to end a scene so agitating, and affectionately taking her hand said, with deep emotion, "My Beatrice knows I have always loved her, but she shall now see how I esteem and can trust her. For one week, Beatrice, you have my consent to remain here, and I know without that you would not stay an hour. There can, I trust, be no risk. Your welfare is necessary to make my own life endurable; but you are well aware, that no one is worse than I am at refusing a request, therefore come to me sometimes for one hour; and I shall endeavour to do without you during the rest." At these words an expression of fierce

delight glittered in the eyes of Father Eustace, while Lady Edith, on whom nothing was lost, slowly continued: "I must honestly own—for cost what it may, I will speak the truth—that this lady habited now as an abbess, is evidently the person saved from shipwreck with Beatrice; no legal proof is necessary of that; but tell me, Lord Eaglescain,—on your word of honour as a British peer,—is this the mother of Beatrice?"

Lady Edith's brilliant eyes had always seemed to have the power of divining at a glance the inmost recesses of any one's most secret thoughts, and her look became fastened on Lord Eaglescain, as if life or death were in his reply, but he stammered, his eyes fell, and his answer broke down entirely; until Father Eustace, with a resolute composure, put in his word, saying, "We are ready to pledge ourselves"——

Lady Edith's eye, calm, resolute, and clear-sighted, still remained steadily fastened on Lord Eaglescain, while, as if no interruption had taken place from the priest, she added, "Let my reliance be on your honour, Lord Eaglescain. Your confessor and I have always preferred being strangers. In my Church there is no difference between a wicked falsehood, and a religious lie told under a dispensation for the advantage of a certain church. To you, Lord Eaglescain, I appeal as a British peer, to whom truth and honour are one. If you can pledge your sacred word that Beatrice is now in the presence of her own mother, she shall have my consent to remain under your roof for a week."

Lord Eaglescain, industriously twisting his spectacles between his fingers, gave a furtive glance towards Father Eustace. He looked much confused, and considerably alarmed besides, but his very soul seemed in a state of helpless prostration before the priest; whose features retained their usual imperturbable stillness; yet some signal passed between them, such as the initiated only could understand. Lord Eaglescain carefully avoided the eye of Lady Edith, and after a few moments' pause, assumed towards her an expression of towering pride not to be questioned, and said, vainly attempting a tone of resolute assurance, "I have no reason to doubt the assertion of Father Eustace, or the evidence of my own senses, that the mother of Miss Farinelli still lives."

Lady Edith's eyes remained fixed on the averted face of Lord Eaglescain, with a look of almost pitying forbearance, though of evident misgiving, while trying to trace whether any Jesuitical evasion were concealed under his reply, and her silence was eloquent with emotion, while a pause of several minutes ensued, during which the fine but very stern eyes of Father Eustace shot a glance at the hesitating peer, of angry and very solemn admonition. Beatrice meanwhile could not but perceive the telegraphic looks of the priest, and with what an angry shrug he turned away while she leaned on the chimney-piece, looking white as the marble beside.

her, yet there appeared an increasing air of lofty decision and of gentle firmness in her expression now, very different indeed from the careless girlish vivacity of former days.

Sir Allan, while in his restless agitation he impatiently tattooed on the table beside him, secretly thought that among all the beautiful statues he had ever admired abroad, he had never yet beheld the representation of so much grace, of so much beauty, of so much simple dignity, as in the lovely companion of his own boyhood, now lost to him for ever.

"Beatrice," said Lady Edith, her lip quivering with emotion, but now impatient to close an interview which had caused to both the most death-like anguish, "this is our first separation, but I can trust to your faithful affection even when leaving you in this house. Your religion is not like the ivy that cannot stand alone, yet were my words now the last piece of motherly advice your old friend is ever to give, it should be this, 'Adhere to your Bible.'"

Father Eustace started angrily forward with teeth clenched, and contempt blazing in his eye; but Lady Edith firmly met his irritated glance, and then, with an irresistible burst of strong emotion, most unlike her usual calm self-possession, she clasped Beatrice in her arms and added, in a tone of solemn earnestness, "Martyrs will abound, Beatrice, where martyrs are required, but how many have died for the difference of faith which divides you from those with whom you are now to be left! I could myself go to the stake,—I could perish in such flames as Father Eustace says I deserve, rather than see you part with a single Protestant principle. May that be your guide, and then, come what may in this world, or in the world to come, we shall meet again. Time is short and life very uncertain, but no mortal can part us for ever. We meet again!"

"Yes!" exclaimed Beatrice, with a flash of strong determination in her beautiful eyes, "When you please, Aunt Edith, and where you please, we shall meet again."

Lady Edith and Beatrice remained for several minutes locked in each other's arms. Their feelings were too solemn for tears, too deep for words;—once more they embraced, and Lady Edith, filled with internal anguish, and not venturing to look up, passed out of the room, leaning on the offered arm of Sir Allan, who conducted her to the carriage, and protested, in a voice, low, tremulous, and broken with agitation, that he would watch over Beatrice,—that he would call soon and often to see Lady Edith herself at Heatherbrae.

Father Eustace and Mr. Ambrose, looking like a couple of lay figures, observed every evidence of natural feeling with strongly marked contempt; but while Sir Allan had listened and observed what passed with an almost convulsive eagerness, the shadowy chain of all his old associations and of all his long cherished love for Lady Edith and Beatrice, seemed to revive in greater strength if possible than ever. "Surely my uncle will never be found beside Truth at the bottom of a well," muttered he to himself; "Father

Eustace, too, sailed very near the wind in all he asserted, but whatever pain it costs his conscience is a sacrifice to benefit the church."

A smile,—a momentary one, passed, like a gleam of light, over Lady Edith's features, as in taking the arm of Sir Allan she observed his emotion; for now a hopefulness, not to be entirely crushed by surrounding circumstances, whispered to her that he might yet be reclaimed,—and her last words to Beatrice at parting were, "Be happy here, my dear girl, if you can,—it will be my greatest comfort, in our first separation, to believe that you are so. No doubt can ever occur to my mind that you will always even here remain faithful and true to your own religion and to your own friend. Yes! you will walk safely through all the burning ploughshares of controversy."

Beatrice listened in tears, and felt how difficult it would be to enjoy anything without the kind companion, who, having lost every earthly desire on her own account, yet endeavoured to bestow on her beloved young *protégée* such happiness as she could never herself enjoy. There is no second spring on earth for the broken in heart.

One moment, and the carriage had drawn to the door of St. Bridget's Chapel, to convey Lady Edith, and in little more than a moment she had been handed into it. Gradually her spirits became more composed, and the sight of external nature again had its usual influence in soothing her agitated spirit; and, above all, the sight of her own pupils and pensioners at Clanmarina, who rushed to the doors and windows of their dwellings to give her a smiling welcome on returning home "at last;" and a hurrah so loud and discordant that it sounded almost like a chorus for the million.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Did any one that he was happy say,
Johnson would tell him plainly 'twas a lie!
A lady told him she was really so,
On which he sternly answer'd, 'Madam, no!'"

BEATRICE, according to Lady Edith's advice, resolved to be amused and happy, while joining in all the diversions at Eaglescairn, during this forced absence from her own quiet home. The pompously magnificent style continued long a subject of wonder and a source of ennui to her unaccustomed mind; but she never tired of contemplating the fine old pictures, among which was one by Gainsborough universally thought to bear an almost miraculous resemblance to herself. It was the beautiful wife of the previous Lord

Eaglescairn, in all the pride of youth and beauty, but so startlingly like Beatrice that Lord Iona declared he could hardly tear himself away from admiring it. "She must have been your grandmother without knowing it!" he said one morning, after looking first at the portrait and then at Beatrice. "Do you not feel as if looking in a mirror when that picture catches your eye?"

"Yes; if I had ever worn a court-dress like that splendid gold brocade, and the nodding plume of feathers. One of them has dropped out of her head, you see, and she has smilingly picked it up. I never saw so exquisite a painting, or so life-like a countenance."

"Do let us have you in a tableau to represent this picture!" exclaimed Lady Anne. "I know where that very dress has lain in a chest, like the 'Bride of the Mistletoe Bough,' for half a century, and you positively shall let us see you in it, feathers and all! I am sure we should all then trace the resemblance, though Miss Turton says the picture is quite as like herself."

"Pshaw! Miss Turton would see herself in a stone wall," said Lord Iona impatiently. "But now for making that portrait live. My mother allows me the use of her whole stage wardrobe for such occasions; therefore, Anne, pray lose not a minute."

"You speak as if I were a perfect dawdle, Iona; but when did I ever put off any pleasure for half a moment?" said Lady Anne, hurrying Beatrice away with her; "but I am a perfect Gulliver, insensible to all the Lilliputian attacks of your petty malice."

In the very shortest possible time a picture-frame had been produced from the garret, a black gauze was hung before it, and Beatrice, blushing and smiling, stood beside that old picture. It had a pretty, pouting, spoiled-child expression, which she exactly imitated, and thus appeared as its living and perfect representative. "Wonderful! strange! unaccountable!" was the universal exclamation, and so occupied were the company of comedians and actors with the astonishing effect of their experiment, that they were not aware of any one else having entered, till Beatrice was startled out of her assumed posture by hearing an angry oath of astonishment and consternation muttered at her side; and, on looking hurriedly round, she saw the object of her especial terror, Lord Eaglescairn, with a look of strange agitation, standing beside Father Eustace, whose eyes were fixed upon her with an expression of wonder and even of dismay. Beatrice instantly stepped out of her frame, and plucked the feathers from her head, with a feeling of alarm that she had been led into doing that of which Lord Eaglescairn disapproved; but no further notice was ever taken of the incident, and the lively Lady Anne soon forgot that interruption to Beatrice's representation, while she dressed up a group, including herself, as a young novice taking the veil, with Miss Turton equipped as lady abbess, and Sir Allan as her confessor.

When Beatrice was suddenly separated from Lady Edith, under

such very peculiar circumstances, she resolved to look her own position full in the face. She firmly contemplated bread and water for the whole week, and even a dark room, which she had always most particularly abhorred. In short, little Red Ridinghood was not more in terror of the wolf than she was of Father Eustace, knowing as she did that persecution is the duty of a papist. She remembered, without flinching, how cruelly Constance de Beverley had been built up in the wall of her convent, and a grand martyr-spirit beat high in the warm heart of Beatrice, as she asked herself how much for conscience sake she could be ready to endure? In her own private room, her hands clasped on her knees, and her eyes steadfastly fixed on the floor, perhaps Richard the Third, before the battle of Bosworth, was not more disturbed in his mind than Beatrice, now sitting *tête-à-tête* with her own thoughts, looking patient, resigned, but most anxious and unhappy.

Beatrice was armed, in short, at all points for any trial except that which actually came, and which had not occurred to her imagination. Expected circumstances never happen! From the hour of Lady Edith's departure to Heatherbrae, the subject of religion was not once mentioned in her presence. It seemed to have vanished from the recollection of all present, while nothing was thought of but how to make life one scene of holiday enjoyment.

Mr. Ambrose, having incidentally mentioned that the monks of St. Bernard's amuse themselves during the long winter evenings with whist, round-games, and dancing, Lord Iona said he thought it too good an example not to be followed. He joyously ordered up the Highland piper immediately, and according to Highland practice all the servants were invited to join in reels and country dances. A gay scene took place now in that grand saloon, which had seemed hitherto dedicated only to dignified dulness, and Beatrice felt in a surprising dream when she heard the bagpipes playing their noisiest measure, and when she saw round her the merriest party ever assembled together for diversion, even in the merriest of houses.

Beatrice knew that the personages most supernaturally proud towards their equals, are those who delight most to excite themselves by performing some piece of miraculous condescension towards those immeasurably beneath, and she saw this confirmed when Lady Eaglescairn, with a smile of almost royal suavity, permitted herself to be placed at the head of a country dance, opposite to her greatly honoured, but rather intimidated partner, Mr. Macgregor, the head gardener. The Duke of Dorchester stood next below, with the very prettiest dairymaid who ever handled a churn, all dimples, smiles, and blushes, but evidently uplifted by this unusual honour far above the plebeian valets and grooms, whose attentions had hitherto been very acceptable; and as Beatrice took her place with Lord Iona, who seemed quite in a happy frenzy, they both laughed immeasurably to observe the enchanting mixture of dignity and frolic with which Miss Turton consented to perform with the game-

keeper. The poor man, with a head like a Scotch terrier, looked in a state of frantic awkwardness, under the overwhelming honour of such a partner.

"Sir Allan," said Lady Anne, who had been in very deep conversation with the Chief for nearly an hour, evidently on some topic of the gravest interest, "we shall soon take leave for ever of scenes such as these; but nuns abroad often bid farewell to the world by giving a ball, and dancing their last gay steps, before the final important step of all! Now let me tell you in the very strictest confidence, that I am actually disengaged for the next country dance."

"Indeed!" replied the young Chief, his handsome care-worn countenance relaxing into something very like the cheerful smile of his early days, and he looked now, dressed in the McAlpine tartan, the very image of Sir Evan.

"Pray, Sir Allan!" said the lively Lady Anne, stirring up a whirlpool in her tea-cup, "am I talking to my parrot, only to receive one word of reply! The remark I laid before you is, that a country dance, when well played, is very apt to make one think of dancing!"

"An exceedingly natural association of ideas," replied Sir Allan: "I am quite a paragon in everything except dancing, but that, for some years, has not been, as you know, my forte."

"What! a Highland Chief, and not dance to your own enlivening bagpipes? Impossible! You could not sit still if you tried! I certainly cannot!"

"And why should we?" said Sir Allan, rising with all the alertness of his boyhood. "David danced, and we read in Scripture that 'there is a time to dance.'"

"It is quite a natural vent to one's exuberant spirits," said Lady Anne, also rising eagerly. "Pray observe old Macgregor's pirouettes! It is a singular phenomenon in dancing, that the largest and heaviest men always spring the most buoyantly off the floor, and Macgregor looks like a barrel endowed with the activity of any cork springing from a bottle of champagne."

The feet of the dancers seemed everywhere at once, or nowhere, as they became almost invisible often, from the rapidity of the performers' motions, springing, pirouetting, screeching, snapping their fingers, whirling each other round, and flinging their limbs into inconceivable contortions. The exhibition had altogether a savage New Zealand aspect; but this was the old national dance, performed centuries ago in these very halls, and Beatrice watched with delight and wonder the careless gaiety of this animated party, so full of life and frolic.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"On her hard pillow—there, alas! to be
 Nightly, through many and many a dreary hour,
 Wan, often wet with tears,—
 In anguish, in the ghastliness of death:
 Hers never more to leave those mournful walls,
 Even on her bier."—ROGERS.

THE newly-found parent of Beatrice, having lived during twenty years struggling for the extinction of every earthly attachment, seemed to have most perfectly succeeded at last, as the mother and daughter had but one short interview every day in the presence of Father Eustace, to whom only the recluse ever spoke, while the priest interpreted the little she said, and suppressed most of it according to his own extremely strict notions of secrecy and discretion. There lurked a strange look of vacant fatuity in the eye of that solitary devotee, which never seemed to gleam with any aspect of intelligence except when a look of almost childish pleasure was excited, if she gazed at her collection of relics, rosaries, medals, and images. She had also a multitudinous picture-gallery, portraits of various saints, many of which were believed, on the authentic testimony of Father Eustace, to nod, wink, and bleed, when for special occasions required so to exhibit their powers.

There are no colours, in reality, so bright as those of hope, and many a glowing picture had Beatrice in former days sanguinely drawn, according to her own Protestant views, of what a restoration might be to the affections of a long-lost parent. In such a case the blessing of a kind Providence should have been recognised in those sacred ties of earthly attachment which God has himself implanted, to which He promises his special care, and by which He illustrates his own immeasurable love to the children He has created. Beatrice had often in her day-dreams imagined the fond embrace of her own mother, the tears of joy with which they might meet, the kind eye beaming upon her, and the gentle tone of maternal affection. Here, on the contrary, in the newly-arrived visitor, was that unnatural extinction of the most innocent and commendable feelings which is inculcated as the perfection of Popish devotion; and when Beatrice gazed wonderingly at the cold automaton before her, contrasted with the warm glow of maternal affection she was accustomed to from Lady Edith, she felt stronger than ever in her conviction, that the true end of Christianity is to elevate but not to extinguish the best sensibilities of man. In looking, too, at the little toy-shop of relics and images to which the whole soul of this melancholy recluse seemed devoted, she felt confirmed, beyond all doubt, in her belief, that the invisible soul is created to worship an invisible God, and that the moment men require a tangible

object to excite the feelings of adoration, they have become idolaters.

Lady Anne had requested that a room might be prepared for Beatrice, after Lady Edith's departure, next to her own, with the secret hope of signalling herself by making a conversion, and she seemed to have no idea that there ever is a moment when people like to be alone. At all hours and every minute she darted into the room full of some important nothing, endeavouring to throw Beatrice off her guard, while she sometimes spoke with dignified triumph of wishing others would resign, like her, all the gaities and frivolities of life; but she had certainly taken up in exchange the frivolities of superstition. "Ah!" said she one day in her own boudoir, after having shown to Beatrice her large collection of painted missals and prints, "you are looking at this red silk curtain and trying to guess what is behind?"

"Indeed, Lady Anne, I have no female curiosity—none whatever! but I am dying to know," said Beatrice, smiling: "I have no objection to be told what you have so mysteriously concealed there."

Lady Anne, silently, and with rather more gravity than usual, drew aside the curtain, and displayed a small image of St. Veronica. A *prie-Dieu* chair stood before it, and Lady Anne, having opened a neatly-formed lid over the summit, drew up from this concealed recess in the chair two candlesticks. She then lighted the candles, and from the same concealed receptacle on the top of the chair, she raised up a beautifully-carved little ebony crucifix, thus making a sort of extempore altar. "You see," said Lady Anne, gravely, "to a person like me, only in the middle classes of intellect, what an advantage it is to have no exercise of mind required. I go over my rosary twice a-day, and am not required to understand a syllable of it. The rest of my devotional time is filled up with incessantly repeated *Ave Marias*. I sometimes fall asleep, for the continual sameness of these words is like the rocking of a cradle to the mind, but so easy! I would not have the labour of thinking for worlds."

"But you may lose worlds by not thinking for yourself," observed Beatrice, with friendly earnestness. "Dear Lady Anne! can you breathe, or eat, or sleep, by proxy? and how much less can you exercise the nobler functions of thought and prayer by deputy! Oh, think, read, and pray for yourself!"

It appeared now, as if the only object of those around was to make Beatrice forget that there is anything serious in life at all, while they beset her with every imaginable indulgence. She was surprised one evening when entering her room to prepare for dinner, to find conspicuously laid on her toilette the most splendid dressing-box, mounted in gold and lined with crimson velvet, that she had ever seen. A card lay on the top, which bore this inscription, in large letters: "The gift of an unknown relative." Beatrice felt half afraid to touch this unaccountable apparition, its arriva!

seemed so like magic, and her amazement increased the longer she examined it. Everything was there which the most elaborate toilet could require, and many things for which she could scarcely devise a use at all. The most delicious perfumes and cosmetics were included, ivory-handled brushes, and even a pretty little casket of jewels, which seemed to the admiring eyes of Beatrice unsurpassably beautiful, especially a Geneva watch, studded with diamonds, scarcely larger than a shilling, with a small gold chain of the most exquisite workmanship, for suspending it round her neck. Beatrice had been seated for several minutes in astonished contemplation of all these glittering ornaments, when she suddenly felt a hand on her shoulder, while the smiling face of Lady Anne, looking somewhat flushed and excited with pleasure, appeared.

"Certainly Cinderella's god-mother has been at my toilet this morning!" said Beatrice, with amazement: "I am in a state of dumb surprise!"

"And I am in a state of clairvoyance! I see a vision before me of Beatrice Farinelli, with a shower of prosperity falling on her graceful head—the admired of all admirers—and surrounded by every luxury. Much has been, I am told, unfairly withheld from her, but like the Chancellor of the Exchequer receiving arrears of taxes and conscience-money, it is all now to be refunded. Only be a little conformable, and you are about to become a very fortunate little personage; therefore prepare your mind to be tried with a flood of prosperity."

"If I have any just claim on unknown relatives," said Beatrice, "let them become known. Till they do, I prefer dependence on a known benefactress, on whom I have no earthly claim but her own generous affection. With all that is necessary, Lady Edith has liberally supplied me; and I ask no luxury but entire confidence and mutual attachment. Till these generous friends receive me and receive my thanks personally, I do not need their assistance. It would be an injury to my benefactress were I to say that I require anything from them."

"How absurdly ceremonious!" exclaimed Lady Anne, laughing. "As soon as you cease to be a heretic, they are all ready to introduce themselves to you."

"If they are to wear a mask till I comply with that condition, we must be for ever strangers," answered Beatrice, with a regretful smile.

Lady Anne made no reply, being for once at a loss what to say. She had set her heart upon performing a meritorious act, by bringing over Beatrice as a trophy of her own to Rome, and she was by no means satisfied with the success of her first attempt. Trusting much, however, to the sudden formation of an eternal friendship, on the true boarding-school model, and to her own enthusiastic representations of Romanism, she determined to persevere through every imaginable discouragement; and she did.

"You are at very unfair odds, Miss Farinelli, against the whole house; but here is a book I wish you should read," said Lady Anne one day, to Beatrice. "It is the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Like you, she was troubled with doubts respecting the absolute authority of the Church, and its right to make us believe what is even against the evidence of our senses; but she escaped that snare by prostrating her own mind, will, and opinions, as if they were dead, before the authority of her confessor. At the close of her long life, spent in blind, headlong, unquestioning obedience, even at the total surrender of her conscience to the voice of the Church speaking through the priest, Elizabeth became, by starving and sleeplessness, so eminent a saint that she performed miracles!"

"I see daily at Heatherbrae a greater miracle than any Popish saint ever performed," said Beatrice, with affectionate enthusiasm: "Lady Edith is not raised in body off the ground during any fifty-times repeated Ave Marias, as some of your saints are said to be; but she lives, in society or in solitude, always so under the influence of religion, that not a word she speaks, not a breath she draws, is without a pleasing consciousness that, under the benignant eye of an invisible Creator, she is answerable for a right and thankful use of all his gifts. There is gross materialism in your religion, not only in the solid and monstrous idols you worship, but also in the scourging and maltreating of your own bodies."

"Surely you cannot object to a sinner anticipating in time the punishment he deserves in eternity, and laying up a store of merit also for those he loves. You should read of St. Alphonso Liguori, who scourged himself a few years ago to such an excess, that his friends had to burst open his door, and snatch the discipline out of his hands, fearing he might cause his own death."

"I never feel edified by accounts of bodily suffering, which is much better left to our imagination," replied Beatrice, thoughtfully. "It seems part of the materialism in your church, that so much prominence is given to personal tortures. Our sympathy for the most frightful corporeal torments, great as it ought to be, and is, cannot be so intense as that excited by the mental anguish which belongs to our nobler nature."

"I think," said Lord Iona, in his usual rattling, heedless tone, "my own life has hitherto been made to resemble a Christmas tree—my root in the earth, my head to the sky; the gay lights glittering on every leaf or branch, and toys or bon-bons enough for a carnival to enliven the whole—but the pleasures of intellect and feeling were wanting, and these now far outweigh in my estimation all others, though these are what Father Eustace wishes to deprive you of for life. Really, Anne, your obedience to that confessor has grown so implicit now that you would, if he desired you, go up to the moon on a ladder of ropes."

"I should at least try."

"And if he asserted the very stoutest impossibilities, you would

believe them to be possible. Well, if you want a testimonial to Father Eustace of your believing and doing implicitly all he desires you, refer him to my office. His legends are all pyramids reversed, resting on the smallest possible foundation."

No obvious attempt was made to dissuade Beatrice from fulfilling her promise to visit Lady Edith almost every day, but no facilities were afforded her, and a thousand little tempting excursions were planned for her, which that engagement frustrated; but when she still persisted in going, Lady Eaglescain treated her resolution as a mere amiable weakness, a thing to be good-humouredly winked at, as it was certain to become in time a most intolerable bore. Though a carriage was at all times ready, therefore, to convey Beatrice with any party anywhere else, so that she should explore every valley or hill within reach, and admire every old ruin or picturesque village in the country, still Heatherbrae alone seemed left always in oblivion, and no carriage ever offered itself to go there; while any passing remark these visits ever did excite, was in a tone of the most contemptuous disparagement.

That the mind of Beatrice was calm under her present ordeal cannot be imagined, yet no one could have guessed how much she really did suffer from being in constant mental opposition to all those around her who seemed in other respects so anxious that she should be pleased and happy. Complaisant by nature, she felt bound nevertheless to remain firm respecting even the most trifling word or action that involved a principle; yet to be constantly on the defensive in the society of friends was so new to her, that she felt her head at last like broken china with agitation. Beatrice felt it at times delightful beyond expression, to escape from all the party, and to proceed with her own free, springing, animated step to Heatherbrae. But that walk was not long to be taken alone, for both Sir Allan and Lord Iona had with watchful anxiety discovered the hour at which her pilgrimage usually begun, and both always happened, by a well-contrived accident, to meet her at the same hour and on the very same spot. These two self-appointed *aides-de-camp*, though evidently jealous of each other, kept up a gay effervescence of small talk which so beguiled the long distance to Beatrice that her mind appeared to be on a mental railroad, as the gay little party advanced pleasantly and rapidly along every successive subject of conversation as well as along the road.

During a pause in the flow of words McAlpine remarked, "the sight of these old haunts, Iona, has made me sad beyond all power of expression. I remember once a gay and happy boy here in a state of sun-bright felicity, protected from every evil, indulged in every innocent pleasure, loved and cherished, and almost idolised. I see him now old before his time, broken in spirit, frustrated in hope, and done already with life. It is my own voluntary act. Yet at this moment I do feel how strange is the contrast. I cannot but ask myself, in the absence of that admirable uncle, who usually

supports my resolution, Is it indeed my duty to be what I am rather than what I might be?"

"My dear friend, as our old huntsman would say, we must 'hark you back.' Now listen well, for I mean to be most tremendously impressive," replied Lord Iona earnestly. "Conscience tells you loudly, McAlpine, that you have a part to act for yourself in life, and Father Eustace, backed by Mr. Ambrose, says you have not. Conscience bids you come forth such a chief of McAlpine as Sir Evan once was, but Father Eustace bids you burrow like a mole in a cell, leaving the priest himself to live and act for you. Say, which is right? It was well said that a monk is a man who commits himself to prison for being religious; and certainly it is thought punishment enough for criminals to have solitary imprisonment for one month only. Father Eustace would make you no more fit to fulfil the purpose for which you were made, than a torn umbrella, or a balloon with a hole in it. Are not your limbs given you to walk with? Are not your eyes given you to see with? and has your Creator given you an intellect and conscience that are not your own? Those who would urge the extinction of these are the Thugs of Christendom."

"Macbeth says, 'The times have been that when the brains were out the man would die, and there an end,'" replied Beatrice. "But Romanism wages a fierce war of extermination against the human mind, and makes its votary a mere breathless automaton, not allowed upon his own judgment to know black from white, or right from wrong, or truth from fiction. The priests put out the eyes of his understanding, that he may be led or driven blindfold by others."

"Do you remember, McAlpine, my cousins, the Hamiltons, at Harrow?" asked Lord Iona. "There were seven brothers, you know, all the most idle, mischievous, rattle-pated boys on the face of this good-for-nothing world of ours. They were in perpetual scrapes, and under well-deserved punishment. Well, one became a sailor, another a soldier, another a diplomatist; but Ronald, number four, the greatest scamp of all, has now become a Popish priest, and is treated with almost divine honours in the Duke of Highgate's family, where he is appointed confessor. I never was more astonished in my life than when I went this summer to spend a week at Highgate House, and first caught a twinkle of my cousin Ronald's rogueish eye endeavouring to look me down by an over-done air of the most austere hypocrisy. I had heard the Crofton girls talking in raptures, during luncheon, of 'Father Ignatius,' but conceive my consternation to see Ronald, whom I had last parted with on the top of a ladder robbing his father's old pear-tree, now promoted to act as the infallible director of everybody's conscience! I wonder who he confesses to himself, as Ronald's confessor will have no sinecure, or he is not Ronald Hamilton."

"But," said Sir Allan gravely, "Father Ignatius is now a perfect saint."

"He is no more a saint than Cincinnatus," interrupted Lord Iona impetuously. "I know my cousin thoroughly. The title of 'Father' in the sense used by Papists should be assumed by no human being."

"But," observed Beatrice, "every Popish priest is anxious to assume it, by which he acquires a sort of dignity, as if that title were a kind of spiritual peerage."

"My cousin, Father Ronald Hamilton, throws a drapery of empty observances over the most hollow-hearted hypocrisy. His observances of religion, replete with strange attitudes and tedious repetitions, at the Duke of Highgate's, reminded me of the absurd ceremonies in the court of China. Had I seen no better religion than Ronald Hamilton's, at Highgate House, and what I see nearer home, I should soon have fallen into infidelity. My downward course was stopped at Heatherbrae."

Beatrice felt touched to the soul by this unexpected tribute to her beloved benefactress, so gracefully spoken, while it was evidently sincere, and when she met the brilliant glance of Lord Iona's eyes fixed upon herself, a scarlet blush overspread her countenance, indicating the many mingled emotions which agitated her mind.

"Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd brighter from her eyes—
They were so soft—so beautiful—so rife
With all we can imagine of the skies."

With a vivid impression on their minds of the silent, emaciated, self-absorbed devotee, who claimed Beatrice at Eaglescairn, she and her two companions entered the sunny little garden at Heatherbrae.

Looking unobserved through the little glass folding-door at Heatherbrae, Beatrice and her two animated companions witnessed such a scene of single-hearted benevolence, as well as of rational happiness, founded on reason and duty, that they silently paused for several minutes, admiringly to contemplate it. The monitor's class of elder girls from the village school had assembled in Lady Edith's boudoir to receive her own instructions, and she, dressed simply, though suitably to her dignified position, was talking to them on their future duties in life. Every young face seemed to have caught a spark of intelligence from hers, as the fine expression of Lady Edith's eyes became softened into a warm glow of kindness, when fixed on those whom it was her fervent wish to enlighten with a knowledge as well as with a love of the truth.

The little half-smile of respectful interest with which Lady Edith's young pupils listened to her, suddenly spread over their whole faces in a blaze of sunshine, when they perceived Beatrice nodding to them at the window, and as she stepped into the room all discipline was forgotten in a joyful rush of her little pupils to welcome her and Lady Edith, equally delighted, closed her book and hurriedly rose to welcome Beatrice with joyful rapture.

"And Allan, too!" she exclaimed, holding out her hand to the young Chief, but tears which she tried to hide filled her eyes as she did so; "Allan, you are welcome as sunshine. If I might have selected any pleasure that would make me the happiest to-day, should it not have been such a visit as this from you and your two companions? Yes! this unexpected sight of you, Allan, is a cordial to the heart that has loved you longest and best on earth now."

"I believe we always love most deeply those we have benefited," answered Sir Allan, in a tone of affectionate respect; "therefore, every recollection of my happy boyhood tells my heart how much Aunt Edith must love me! Even yet my whole mind and heart seem to dilate with new vigour as I look at you. Old times, old feelings, old affections, revive in these beloved old scenes! How dear to me is every recollection now crowding into my memory! Oh! surely this is as it should be; not the extinction of nature, but the purifying of all its best impulses; not the prostration of intellect, but its highest elevation; not the crushing down of earthly affections, but the embellishing of them all with cheerful, hopeful, trusting piety."

"True, McAlpine, and long may you think so," added Lord Iona, warmly; "instead of looking for magical miracles, such as seeing people, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended in the air during their often-repeated Ave Marias, let us rather look for the miracle of an elevated understanding, raised above all that is seen and temporal, to appreciate the chief glory of our own nature as about to become connected with what is unseen and eternal. I more and more observe the immeasurable superiority of a spiritual over a material worship. Above all things on earth, McAlpine, beware of letting your mind collapse finally into Jesuitism, for then you will be surrounded with keepers who feed your delirium incessantly, and be put in some asylum where there is no wish to cure you, but only such hard treatment, starving, scourging, and solitude, as is exploded now even in prisons and mad-houses."

"If we are preserved from such a fate," said Beatrice, gratefully, laying her hand on the arm of Lady Edith with a look of thrilling emotion, "I see the benefactress to whose instructions my own present safety is owing. Never did you expect, Aunt Edith, that I should need as I do now all the warnings you gave us, but you fortified the garrison before it was attacked. Oh that my affection could return an hundredth part of the good you have done me!"

"How much more than repaid I am, my own Beatrice, for whatever a kind Providence privileged me to do for you! It has long been the greatest happiness of my life, never for one instant to doubt your affection, or to find it wanting."

"It would break my heart if it ever did! No, Aunt Edith, years and experience only prove what I owe you."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“Affections trampled on and hopes destroy’d,
Tears wrung from very bitterness, and sighs
That waste the breath of life—these all were here.”
L. E. L.

THE long-looked-for day came at last, on which Beatrice was to be restored to her old, quiet, well-beloved home; and though there was in the depths of her heart an unacknowledged feeling of regret at losing the too agreeable society of Lord Iona, she felt in her still mysterious unclaimed state, it were best not to remain in the way of becoming more intimate with him, nor more exposed to the influence of those who were leaving no means untried to subvert her faith and principles. Hints were multiplied more and more now, of what she lost by remaining obstinately deaf, as well as blind to her own interest, and Father Eustace, by using the sacred name of her silent mother, obliged Beatrice to hear, with some attention, what was supposed to come from a parent.

“Why should there be any stranger priest as a medium of communication between us?” asked Beatrice, indignantly. “Have we not both been endowed with eyes and ears? If I have a mother, let her speak to me. You have the power to grant me this.”

“Never, while you remain an obstinate heretic! Never!” replied the priest, in a stern undertone.

“Then truly I think, that for malice and vengeance a Cherokee Indian might take lessons from you,” answered Beatrice, indignantly. “What animal is there that does not communicate with its own progeny? and shall a rational mother alone be deprived of the happiness which belongs to the very lowest animals?”

“Some of our most eminent saints on earth, Miss Farinelli, being resolved to humble that pride of human intellect which is too apt to arise in the natural mind, have spent months in imitating such animals as you speak of. There were those once, who condemned themselves to purr like a cat, to go on all-fours, and even to catch mice——”

“Well! I could not do that, as I am a dreadful coward for mice,” interrupted Beatrice, unable to suppress a smile; “and often when I have tremblingly watched one darting along the floor, or springing on my bed, I have thought, if the least of God’s creatures can inspire me with such fear, what amount of awe should I not feel for that Creator who formed the smallest as well as the greatest of living things, but who gave me a nature superior to them all! It can never become an acceptable sacrifice that we should abjure this privilege, and level ourselves down into mere unthinking irrational brutes. I value highly the honour of man, in being formed after

the image of God, and it seems to my Protestant mind, that those best obey His intentions who aim at a perfect resemblance to Him, as manifested in the human nature of our Divine Saviour."

When Beatrice wished after luncheon, though the morning now became one ceaseless cascade of rain, to depart, and had all her baggage ready, it seemed as if all Lady Eaglesclairn's numerous horses and carriages, either had sprained ankles or broken springs, or were in some way disabled from use, and Beatrice, in a fit of determined independence, had made up her mind that she would reduce her demand to a wheelbarrow for her trunk, and an umbrella for herself, that she might walk to Heatherbrae, rather than disappoint Lady Edith. Lady Anne now suddenly came forward with a most winning smile, and a proposal that Miss Farinelli and all her belongings should be conveyed home in her carriage. This offer was most gladly accepted; but while Beatrice expressed her gratitude and pleasure at so timely a proposal, she was surprised to observe in the eye of her new friend, Lady Anne, a laughing, and what might almost be called a larking expression of fun, frolic, and mischief, for which she felt totally at a loss to account.

Lady Anne was going that day to Inverness, much against the judgment and wishes of Lady Stratharden, but any check-string that a mother could apply would have been weaker than a spider's web, as she went in obedience to an injunction from Father Eustace, to be present at the ceremony of Miss Turton taking the veil, respecting which there had been for several days past a grand note of preparation at Eaglesclairn. The heroine of the day had her vain mind as filled with visions of temporary *éclat* as the most juvenile bride who marries for the trousseau, the favours, and the wedding-cake. The Popish ceremony of a nun taking the veil, is a sort of Barmecide's feast to represent an actual marriage, and Miss Turton already saw before her crowds filling the chapel, the pathway strewn with flowers, the altar decorated with gold, the bridal dress, the universal applause, the gaze of strangers, the procession of nuns, the blessing of bishops, the flattery of Father Eustace, and the tears of any friends she had to mourn for her living death. Miss Turton had taken a picturesque farewell, on the previous day, of all those who were not intending to be present at the ceremony, where she was to perform as "the show, the idol of the day," and she departed, dressed with much more than her usual taste, while she waved her handkerchief, and smiling her last smile, affected the most extravagant spirits. A rumour accidentally reached Beatrice that Bessie McDonald was to accompany Miss Turton in the carriage, and watching privately from the window of her own room, she had seen a figure cowering in the extreme corner, shrunk and wasted, as if by long-endured consumption, and a face pale and corpse-like as a spirit, but so lovely yet, that wan and pallid as it appeared, it was beautiful as no other face, the blue eyes so bright, the white teeth so dazzling, the rich brown hair dropping in a torrent of natu-

ral ringlets on the marble cheek. Yes! it was Bessie McDonald, seen probably for the last time, and as Beatrice gazed at her old favourite, comparing what she was with what she might have been, the tears sprang to her eyes, and she turned hopelessly and most indignantly away.

Robert Carre, too, must have heard, with the watchfulness of devoted affection, that Bessie was about to depart from that neighbourhood for ever, and he stood near the park-gate as the carriage passed. How long and anxiously he had waited to hear the sound of those carriage-wheels! and now big drops of agony started out on his massive forehead; his hat was slouched over his face, and his attitude was one of the deepest dejection. While the lodge-keeper slowly unlocked the heavy iron gate, and swung it open, Miss Turton's conveyance stopped for an instant. Then young Carre rushed forward to the window next poor Bessie, the object of all his deep unalterable affection, and said in accents of wringing anguish, while his whole face was convulsed with irrepressible emotion, "Farewell, Bessie, farewell for ever. We meet no more: yet, Bessie, still dear to me, if ever you want a friend, remember Robert Carre. I would have lived for you; and I could die to serve you now."

The carriage rolled on, and long did Bessie lie fainting and totally insensible at the feet of Miss Turton, who felt the superiority of her own mind in having at once abandoned every human feeling and all the sensibilities of life, for a picturesque dress and a solitary cell, in which to study the difficult art of doing nothing useful, rational, or cheerful.

"Narrow and dark, nought through the gloom discern'd,
Nought save the crucifix, the rosary,
And the grey habit lying by to shroud
Her beauty and her grace."—*Rogers.*

When Beatrice had been comfortably seated in the elegant, well-stuffed and well-hung carriage of Lady Anne, while her baggage was placed in the boot, Lord Iona, who had handed her in, presented her with the most beautiful bouquet that ever grew in any conservatory, and begged that Miss Farinelli would present his most respectful as well as his most kind remembrances to Lady Edith, on whom he would do himself the honour of calling next day. Beatrice coloured, smiled, and bent over her flowers with a complexion that eclipsed the brightest among them; and as the carriage drove on, she fell into the most pleasing little reverie in the world; which so occupied her thoughts that she did not look up till they had driven some miles, and she expected to see the picturesque chimneys of Heatherbrae.

Beatrice gave an exclamation of perplexity and surprise when, after glancing round, she found herself driving over a large open common perfectly unknown to her, and she instantly sprang for

ward to pull the check-string, saying, "Lady Anne, your coachman must have mistaken the road to Heatherbrae."

"Not at all! Thomas has my orders and knows perfectly what he is about," replied Lady Anne, in a tone of suppressed laughter, and Beatrice felt surprised to see her companion's whole countenance glittering with the same smile of fun and frolic which she had observed there in the morning. "The fact is, Miss Farinelli, that I thought you might like to see the field of Culloden, and there it is!"

"Culloden!" exclaimed Beatrice, starting with amazement, "that is nearly five miles off your road!"

"Not a yard! not a finger-length!" answered Lady Anne, looking at Beatrice with a winning smile, which soon turned into an almost hysterical fit of laughter. "Pray do look less astonished. It is too diverting! But now, like a Member of Parliament, I must rise to explain. The truth is, that I am, you know, a spoiled child, accustomed to my own way, and will have it, *coute qui coute*!"

"Not after you take the veil," answered Beatrice, with a smiling earnestness of voice and manner. "In a convent, neither you nor Miss Turton, much as you both like your own way now, can hope for any choice in what you shall read, write, speak, think, love, hate, or do,—not even in what you eat or drink,—whom you speak to, and what you say to them."

"The more reason why I should use my power over you and others as long as it lasts," continued Lady Anne, in a light jesting tone, and her bright laughing eye looked like that of a wild gazelle; "I am always afraid of giving myself heiress-airs, and have not, therefore, done many things that I should have liked to do; but to-day I have really indulged myself in a whim!"

The carriage continued rumbling and jolting over some very indifferent road, while Beatrice still held the check-string, and Lady Anne laughingly grasped her hand so as to prevent her drawing it. Still she seemed deferring her promised explanation, till at length the earnestness with which Beatrice requested to be enlightened obliged her to speak, which she did now with some little trepidation, though still in agonies of suppressed laughter.

"This is entirely a plan of my own, and Father Eustace's! Not another mortal knows of it. We shall be back in two days; but I felt sure, if you had Prince Houssein's glass, you would like a single peep into —, where I am going. You have twice contumaciously refused to come with me, and see my darling, Miss Turton, take the veil; but I was resolute all the time that you shall. Yesterday I wrote to tell 'Aunt Edith' that you are accompanying me to Inverness, on particular business, and Father Eustace undertook himself to deliver my note. Now, pray do not look so scared! you are as safe with me as any mummy in a glass-case. We have Father Ambrose on the dicky behind, and Father Eustace follows to-morrow. How speechless you are with astonishment. Well

it certainly is an odd elopement of mine, to kidnap you, and set off myself with such an escort."

Beatrice was too much overwhelmed with really indignant astonishment to articulate another word, but her eyes spoke volumes of most vexatious perplexity, while her colour went and came, her heart beat almost audibly, and she actually gasped for breath. Still the chariot rolled rapidly on, the driver frantically cracked his whip, and Lady Anne lay back in her carriage laughing in a perfect agony of delight, which was renewed every time she glanced round, with brimming eyes and quivering dimples, at her startled and most unwilling companion.

"Lady Anne," remonstrated Beatrice, with gentle firmness, "I cannot go to witness a scene revolting to my whole feelings and principles! It is not merely the opinion of my best friend on earth, Lady Edith, that influences me, though that is, and ought to be, my chief guide on every occasion,—but indeed, Lady Anne, my own heart and conscience forbid."

"Never mind what they forbid! as Father Eustace says, we have no right to consult either. He would soon relieve you of all that trouble, therefore now you must *monte en croupe, et gallope avec moi.*"

"Impossible! I would rather hire that man breaking stones on the road, to roll me back on his truck, with his plaid to keep me dry, than trust myself in a convent. How do I know that they will ever let me out?"

" 'Will you come into my parlour ?'
Said the spider to the fly ;
'No, thank you, sir, I really feel
No curiosity !' "

"It is too late now to stop," replied Lady Anne in a tone of good-humoured wilfulness. "You lost a whole mile in staring with astonishment at me, instead of pulling the string. No! we are miles and miles on the road now. I never let myself be overruled, especially in my own carriage, and my ill used prisoner will be clever indeed if she escapes me, till I bring her back on Saturday."

"How could you think of such a thing as this?" exclaimed Beatrice in real distress.

"I did not think of it! The whole credit belongs to Father Eustace, who really has a great kindness for you, and who thought the change of scene would do you good. Nothing does people so much good as an agreeable surprise sometimes!" replied Lady Anne, with an incorrigible laugh. "It should be put down, as your admirer Lord Iona says, in every Doctor's prescription. There, what a beautiful colour has rushed into your face! No rose could vie with it. Now do join the 'Tis-well-its-no-worse school.' Be comfortable."

Beatrice leaned thoughtfully back in the carriage, more perplexed

than she had ever expected to be in her life; while Lady Anne rattled on with apparent heedlessness. "There never will or can be a better opportunity for you to see a nun make her profession, and every intelligent person should see everything in life once. Half my pleasure on this occasion is in your astonishment. I am serving you against your will: for on we go, without drawing bridle now, to Inverness."

"Lady Anne! Will nothing ever take the mischief out of your odd, elfish, ridiculous spirit? I cannot leave Aunt Edith so unexpectedly, and enter such a scene, among persons that I consider religiously insane," said Beatrice, very seriously. "I would as willingly accompany Mr. Green in his balloon. It is quite impossible."

"Well, I positively promise you never to do anything that is quite impossible! I make it a rule not to do absolute impossibilities,—indeed, there are in this world none: the family is extinct," answered Lady Anne, with a pouting smile of good-humoured defiance, and afterwards talking on so volubly, that to interrupt her was obviously impracticable—"What a sight this will be for us both! I never saw the ceremony of a nun taking the veil, though I am so soon to act the principal part in such a scene myself. I do long for the day! Miss Turton's dress is only to be of Honiton lace, but mine shall be Brussels, and such a perfect love of a wreath—myrtle and orange flowers! Miss Turton wished me to have jessamine, like her own, but by that time I hope to have real conservatory orange-blossoms, as the perfume is so delicious. My bouquet is already bespoke from Covent Garden market. Father Eustace has taken such a kind interest in it."

"They adorn you with flowers for the sacrifice!" said Beatrice, a sudden emotion of pity banishing, for the moment, every feeling of personal resentment at the strange manoeuvre practised upon her; "but your happiness will fade as rapidly and as surely as your orange-blossoms. Miss Turton talked grandly about giving up the world for pleasures unmingled with earthly dross; but, being so much older than you, she has thirty years less to deplore her mistake in. I would as willingly have gone to see the bride of the mistletoe-bough step into her chest, as to see you take the wrong veil; but Miss Turton has had more time to look before she leaps."

"True," interrupted Lady Anne, with a heedless laugh; "she has lived in a whirlpool of society and amusements, till her hair has grown very grey; she detests all her relations, therefore she does not mind forsaking them; and she never continued any friendship with any one except myself for more than two months. Miss Turton 'mopes for convents, because earth's grapes are sour.' Such admirers as might fall to her share now would probably be old, ugly, and vulgar, with no better home to offer her than a *troisième* garret, with nothing per annum, or a little damp, rheumatic cottage, surrounded by a hedge of sweetbriars. How different that insignifi-

cant fate would be from what I shall perhaps resign—Cairngorum Castle and Sir Allan McAlpine!"

These last words seemed to have sprung to the lips of Lady Anne almost unconsciously; for, after she became aware of having uttered them, a flood of scarlet dyed her cheeks, and she turned hurriedly away to look at her ebony beads, saying, as if her whole heart were occupied with the subject, "My rosary will be splendid! It is presented by the lady abbess of St. Ignatia,—such a charming, never-to-be-sufficiently loved and trusted person."

"The former abbess of that convent disappeared very unaccountably, did she not?" asked Beatrice, in a tone of mysterious awe. "One never knows, in these altered times, what to believe, because the Jesuits purposely circulate stories against themselves, to have a pretext for afterwards publicly contradicting them. An apostate Protestant clergyman will spread a report that he is returning to our Church, merely that he may bring his forgotten name into notice again, and publish some mischievous letter to say that he never knew happiness before he went to Rome. By such means, when people hear a true story, they remember some that turned out false; and, in the general confusion so skilfully created, men tire of crediting actual facts."

"Then you really are a believer in buried-alive nuns, and in rebellious novices being often shut up as mad?"

"Of course! and you were born yesterday, Lady Anne, if you do not know that such things really do occur," replied Beatrice, boldly. "No one doubts, I believe, about the young orphan-heiress at Friburg, who was persuaded, some years ago, by a Jesuit confessor to take the veil. No more was heard of her during fourteen years, when a public investigation became called for: search was made, and this poor girl was found lying upon filthy straw in a damp cellar, with such food beside her as was unfit for the lowest animal. If you once disappear within the walls of St. Ignatia, Lady Anne, giving up your name, and losing your identity, who on earth can ever afterwards release you from the tyranny of men, and from their vices? Do you never imagine the possibility of being utterly and entirely deceived?"

"You were born to set everything to rights in this world, and you seem deeply read in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances," observed Lady Anne, laughing heartily. "My dear Miss Farinelli, you really will bring on a fit of the horrors! I see your hair rising on end with consternation, and you must have it smoothed down again. Make your mind quite easy; for Father Eustace has by this time, I hope, given bail to Lady Edith for your re-appearance on Saturday in her little, dull old Protestant home; so fear nothing."

"Lady Anne, I cannot consent to be caged in that abhorred convent for a single night—no, not for an hour!" replied Beatrice turning her clear, steadfast eye towards her laughing companion. "Those who would shun a fox do not enter his den. How do I

know that they will ever let me out? If you were taking me to a lunatic-asylum, I should know that twice a-year the law reaches to its inmost recesses, and I should be set at liberty, as being entitled to breathe the free air; but if, by force or fraud, I once became a 'sister Bridget,' or 'sister Agnes,' then who on earth has any right or power to rescue me, if I were thrown into a damp, cobwebbed, subterranean cell, in cold and darkness, on the pretext, perhaps, that I was insane, and kept there till I died? Father Eustace may perhaps never even tell Lady Edith exactly where to look for me; and how then am I ever to escape?"

Lady Anne looked for a moment startled and perplexed, and then added, very seriously, "Miss Farinelli, if this were my death-oath, I could assure you, that not for a minute, or half a minute, shall you be detained here after Saturday. But are you not ashamed of liking that weary world so well as to return to it?"

"No more ashamed than I would be of wishing to awake from a feverish dream," replied Beatrice. "And I shall say to Father Eustace when we meet—

"Come tell me, monk, about your magic gardens,
Where not a stringy head of kale is cut,
But breeds a vision or a revelation."

Meanwhile nothing ever was further from the intentions of Father Eustace than to enlighten Lady Edith as to the whereabouts of Beatrice. His promise to Lady Anne, that he would immediately deliver her note, clearly militated against the interests of his church, and therefore, of course, on no account was it to be performed. Lady Edith had, in fact, (as he argued to himself,) no legal right whatever, any more than himself, over a foundling such as Beatrice; and, seeing that it would particularly suit his purposes to detain Miss Farinelli some time in the convent, he resolved that she should there remain.

It might be difficult to pacify Lady Anne, when she discovered that her friendship had been made the means of entrapping Beatrice more seriously than she ever intended; but Father Eustace knew his own power over those who had once confessed to him, and moreover, he knew so well all the little weak sides of his lively, heedless penitent, that he felt a pleasant consciousness of being able to manage her perfectly. Whatever she said or thought, however, his great mind was made up that the convent of St. Ignatia should be a prison to Beatrice as long as he could, by fair means or very doubtful ones, keep her in captivity there: as he had very important reasons of his own why, during the few remaining days or hours of Lord Eaglescairn's life, she should be kept from the possibility of seeing the dying peer.

Lady Edith rose that day with a delightful consciousness that the time had come on which it was promised that Beatrice should be restored to her old, cheerful, well-beloved home: and it was a morning of glorious beauty. The blue mountains were lighted up

on their dark precipitous sides with patches of sunshine—the trees were putting out their early leaves,—it was a perfect flower-show among the crocuses, and a musical festival among the birds.

Lady Edith was in a most unusual fidget of happiness. The day was to be a perfect jubilee of felicity at Heatherbrae, therefore she gave a holiday to her school, an additional watering to her geraniums, and a double feed to her poultry. She adorned Beatrice's writing-table with the choicest flowers, and ordered tea to be brought up the instant her welcome guest arrived. She stirred the sulky slumbering fire into its brightest blaze, drew up all the blinds, and lighted up her own countenance with smiles of anticipated joy. It was impossible to read, and even work was too sedentary for the renewed animation of her spirits, and she wandered as anxiously from window to window as a disappointed sportsman on a rainy day. Hours rolled heavily away,—oh, how heavily! She paced up and down her little garden with anxious restlessness which could not repose, listening with intense eagerness to every distant sound, and mistaking every noise for the roll of carriage-wheels.

"Anne, sister Anne," did not look out more in vain, however, than Lady Edith that day, who was not even rewarded by seeing a cloud of dust on the road. Hours passed on; but Lady Edith, still sanguine, smiled at her own impatience, and thought Lady Eaglescairn had delayed sending Beatrice till she took her own airing, and could bring her young guest, according to promise, home.

Evening closed in, and twilight had darkened into night: but still Lady Edith would not allow herself to suspect that Beatrice could have been prevailed on to disappoint her without even a message to state the reason; therefore the endless day was followed by an endless evening of frustrated hope, during which every sound seemed to her listening ear like the roll of carriage-wheels. Hope deferred had made the heart of Lady Edith sick indeed; but when twelve o'clock struck, every sanguine promise she had made to herself of Beatrice at last appearing, died out: she therefore retired to rest with a consoling resolution to visit Eaglescairn Castle early next morning, and there to reclaim the beloved child of her adoption.

Lady Edith's whole spirit was now on fire with a just indignation at the conduct of those who were evidently endeavouring to make a final division between herself and her beloved Beatrice, in whose affection she felt the most unalterable confidence. This feeling composed her mind, so that she had fallen into a slumber, disturbed and agitated, but still in some degree refreshing, when she was suddenly awakened about three in the morning by a sound of carriage-wheels grinding along the gravel, immediately below her window. Springing out of bed, she eagerly opened the sash, looked joyfully out, and seeing Lady Eaglescairn's chariot close beneath, she told the coachman to wait there as she would summon her servants to admit Miss Farinelli. Not a doubt crossed her mind that Beatrice

was there, though she wondered much not to hear her voice in reply, and she was about to close the casement when a groom, who accompanied the carriage, rapidly dismounted from the box, and respectfully touching his hat as he hurried up to the window, said—

“We are come to fetch Lady Edith Tremorne. Not a moment is to be lost! A lady at the Castle is dying! Dr. McIndre says she has scarcely an hour to live. I was desired to say that her last wish is to see Lady Edith.”

“Who is she? Tell me who. Speak! oh, speak at once! Is it Miss Farinelli?” asked Lady Edith, in a tone of piercing anguish; “in mercy, tell me the worst.”

“I heard no more, Madam! All was hurry and terror at the Castle. My orders were sent to the stable peremptory. I was off in two seconds! They said that the lady would be dead before morning.”

Lady Edith, with trembling hands, threw on what seemed necessary for her drive, and before she had time to think another thought, was already in the carriage at full speed to Eaglescain, without a momentary doubt that it was her own beloved Beatrice to whom she now hastened with the speed of thought, and respecting whose recovery from some sudden illness, the doctor seemed by the groom’s account absolutely to despair.

When she arrived at the door Lady Edith was hurried by a cluster of agitated servants from the carriage up-stairs to a bed-room. There the shutters were closed, the room darkened, the curtains drawn, and a crowd of silent attendants stood around, many with handkerchiefs at their faces evidently in tears, others with a look of solemn awe, but all too much overwhelmed to speak. Lady Edith glanced nervously around, hurried forward to the bed, drew aside the curtain, looked at the dying countenance within, and giving a sigh of infinite relief fell forward, almost fainting, on the bed.

“Hark! to the hurried question of despair,

‘Where is my child?’—an echo answers ‘Where?’”

Byron.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“Cross that threshold, and you are in a strange country—a country which laughs at all your laws. What, then, are *their* laws? That is not known. What we do certainly know—what is not attempted to be disguised—is this: that the barbarous discipline of the middle ages still reigns, and is still practised there. But how are these chastisements administered? Who regulates the number of blows? What must be the nature of the passionate and capricious dominion of woman over woman, when she is displeased with her! An ugly woman ruling over a lovely one—an old one over a young. One dare not think of it!”—MICHELET, *Du Prêtre*, p. 287.

HALF in jest, and more than half in earnest, Lady Anne would take no denial, and at last succeeded in carrying Beatrice, a very much astonished recruit and in a ferment of vexation, to the convent

of St. Ignatia, though the unwilling captive continued earnestly protesting against having been brought on this unexpected excursion at all, and her heart certainly did sink within her when Beatrice saw the iron gate of the convent close with a loud and sudden clang that reverberated through the long aisles and vaulted cloisters, when the rusty iron chain was pulled, which swung beside the door.

"Well!" said Lady Anne, laughing triumphantly at her own felicitous experiment, "since you have at last yielded, must I now beg your pardon?"

"You should do nothing from morning till night but beg my pardon," replied Beatrice good-humouredly, smiling; "I feel as if rushing up to a forlorn hope. Every minute will be a misery to me that I remain among those female Jesuits, who are sworn to a system of mutual betrayal,—who are bound to repress every affectionate impulse, every generous attachment, and to lead a poor mechanical existence far beneath the dignity of human nature. Each of them is a mere spiritual clock, wound up by the priest, and made to go or to stop as he pleases, and even to go wrong if such be his will. You may laugh, Lady Anne,—anybody can laugh; but I cannot respect one who is so circumstanced, or willingly associate with her."

"The horse that goes round blindfold grinds the corn best," said Lady Anne, oracularly; "you and I should neither think nor act nor read for ourselves when we can have a living master like Father Eustace to tell us better than any book what we should do. Now be so kind as not to kill me with that look."

The hollow crash of the convent-bell at this moment attracted the attention of Beatrice, who glanced round a building—the solemn dulness of which actually made her yawn. The high wall which surrounded it had a mysterious, sombre, distrustful aspect, the heavy sullen-looking gates seemed as if borrowed from a gaol, the grate of punched iron, was like that of a larder for meat, and the small riveted iron lattices, from which nothing could be seen, were like those of a sepulchre. "It would be a sad, even if it were a respectable death, to be shut in there for life!" exclaimed Beatrice musingly, while she heard the creaking and sliding of a huge bolt; "you have brought me here, Lady Anne, therefore you must let me say what I think, that you could more easily persuade me I am paralytic, and cannot use my limbs, than that my intellects should be bandaged up as useless and never exercised."

The attendant now drew aside a heavy curtain of dark cloth, and the ladies were ushered into a hall lined with oak, and paved with stone, containing no furniture except a black marble table, bearing a large gilt crucifix.

The reception-room into which Lady Anne and Beatrice were next ushered had, like the rest, a double grating, and exhibited an air of stiff propriety, or as Lady Anne whispered, an old-maidish appearance, like the company-room at a finishing London boarding-school, and tables were set all round for the work of the nuns,

which was displayed, with the prices ticketed as at a fancy fair, to be sold for the benefit of the institution. The door soon after their arrival opened to admit a numerous procession of the sisterhood, come to welcome Lady Anne, while they all assumed what is part of the full-dress worn by nuns for such occasions, an artificial vivacity, most fatiguing to behold.

St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzio wished her nuns to be "as uncultivated as the wild deer," and those in this convent seemed very much on her model, for the object of popery is to wither up all female intellect. As they all clustered eagerly round Lady Anne, Beatrice thought she had never seen so many pallid cheeks, vacant countenances, lack-lustre eyes, and attenuated figures. The senior nun, "sister Martha," seemed to be smiler-general for all the others, as she generally led on the little pantomime of pretended cheerfulness, with a smile stereotyped on her lips, and the rest, who followed her lead, filled up the picture to perfection, thus assuming the full-dress for inspection days. The Mother Superior, who had been occupied in opening letters addressed to the nuns and boarders, and in intercepting several which were not to go, now entered last, and as she paid her stately compliments to Lady Anne, Beatrice, with a start of astonishment, recognised in the Abbess of St. Ignatia the ubiquitous Mrs. Lorraine.

With her hands buried under the folds of her long serge dress, and distinguished from the nuns only by a heavy gold cross, the Lady Abbess made a deep curtsy to Beatrice, her eyes so fastened to the ground that she quite lost the advantage of seeing a start of utter amazement with which her young guest contemplated this new metamorphosis. Once in her life Beatrice had seen a pantomime performed at Inverness, and when Grimaldi, acting the Indian juggler, swallowed a sword, so that the point came out behind, she felt some degree of astonishment, but that was nothing to the amazement with which the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Lorraine in this new character had filled her almost incredulous mind. For a moment their mutual gaze was steadfast and earnest. At length in a calm measured voice, without any change of colour or of a single feature, Mrs. Lorraine said,—“You are welcome at last, my daughter, into a house where your presence has long been desired. Here all sin and frivolity are shut out, and you have nothing but quiet for mind and body. Not even a temptation can assail the peaceful unity of my children and their pious exercises.”

“Mrs. Lorraine, we have known each other long,” said Beatrice, with a calm intelligent smile, “and you know that I would think religion mere child’s play if all its awful difficulties and deep responsibilities could be overcome by merely building ourselves round with a stone wall. It is the battle within ourselves, not the battle around us, that causes the fatal difficulty in obtaining peace, and I shall remain but a very few hours in your Agapemone here, where I have been brought contrary to my own wishes.”

With a look of benevolent pity at Beatrice, and heaving a sigh which might have driven a ship from its moorings, and went into a second and third edition immediately, the Abbess turned away with Lady Anne, leaving Beatrice to follow them into the recreation-room and garden with sister Martha, one of the most trusted nuns in the establishment, but in the confusion of meeting Beatrice, Mrs. Lorraine had forgotten, apparently, to warn sister Martha that their young visitor was a heretic, not to be trusted with the secrets of the prison-house.

Sister Martha was evidently a person of the narrowest intellect, and of very uncultivated faculties, who had read little and thought less; but she nevertheless overflowed with abundance of on-for-ever small talk, and seemed glad that it now found an outlet with one whom she evidently mistook for a convert. When Beatrice, after the Abbess was at a distance, heard the outburst of flimsy nonsense which proceeded from sister Martha, she could scarcely wonder, taking this as indeed a fair specimen of the nun species, that there was only a majority of one, in the council of Cardinals which voted that women have souls.

Sister Martha in her determined endeavour to appear happy burst out several times into fits of unaccountable laughter, and talked on without ceasing about the apparitions that had been seen in the convent, the miracles performed there, and the meritorious penances undergone by the sisterhood. "I had to chew a piece of window-glass into a fine powder yesterday," she whispered confidentially, "in expiation for having rinsed my teeth with water before going to Communion, as nothing must enter the mouth previously."

"Yet does not St. Paul find fault with the Corinthians for coming hungry to the Holy Sacrament, and say,—'Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?'" replied Beatrice; "surely there could be no harm in brushing your own teeth."

"Nothing is mine. We never say my, or mine, of anything. All is in common,—all is ours, nothing mine."

Beatrice could not but smile at this idea, that even the teeth in her head were not sister Martha's own property, but she began to think it was pretty near the truth as to the use she might make of them, when told that the poor nun had on the previous day been allowed no dinner, as a penance for talking without leave, except the apple parings from the Superior's own dessert, which she had to receive thankfully on her knees. Sister Martha pointed out that over the door of each cell stood an inscription containing but one word, to express the character of each nun who selected it for her motto. Over that intended for Miss Turton, was "*Mortificazione!*"

"I know no more of Latin than your parrot, if you have one," continued sister Martha, confidentially, "but I can translate the motto over mine, '*Charitas.*'"

The last notes of a chant were dying away in the distance, when the chapel gates were thrown open, and a procession of girls passed

out close to Beatrice. These young novices had each her hands crossed over her breast and concealed in large white cuffs, and her eyes fastened on the ground, while they all walked with a slow tragedy-step, and whimpered out litanies in Latin, bowing as they passed before a little chapel, or baby-house of glass, containing a waxen image of their patron saint. The smallest irregularity in this childish ceremony was punished as a serious crime, therefore it was with an air of most anxious circumspection that one of the poor disastrous-looking girls carried an image of St. Bridget—a very hideous one, as if it had been her own favourite doll, and the other little girls followed with a perfect pantheon of idols, rosaries, blessed beads, medals, and relics.

"There!" whispered sister Martha, in a tone of confidential secrecy, for she had a ten-gossip power, "those are the girls educated here to act elsewhere as Protestant governesses. Our novices receive first-rate tuition with board and lodging for 30*l.*, therefore they can afford to take situations at such a perfect nothing of a salary, that managing mammas are enchanted to get music and languages taught at half-price, without venturing to make very strict inquiries into creeds and doctrines. People are all so fond of jobbing, that in a year or two, these Protestant ladies give their *protégées* a most flourishing recommendation, and by this means they are started in life without a suspicion or a trace of our teaching discoverable."

"How perfectly honest!" muttered Beatrice to herself, "and how perfectly jesuitical."

"Our pupils have a dispensation to attend any church, and to profess any creed that may be preferred in the families where they serve," continued sister Martha, delighted to hear the sound of her own voice, as she had been under a dispensation of unbroken silence for a fortnight. "I know one of our two cleverest novices is in a Free Church Family now. She is not suspected to have ever entered any Established Church, and one of our favourite pupils pretends to be a great admirer of Dr. Cavendish's sermons. The last we sent out is most confidentially trusted in the family of a rich Quaker."

"But," exclaimed Beatrice, burning with indignation, "have they no scruples?"

"Of course not! They are educated on purpose, and they make the sacrifice of enduring such people for the sake of our Church. Father Eustace gives them absolution secretly once a month, when they tell him all that is said in these houses and report progress among their pupils. The plan works most successfully in gaining a supernatural influence over the rising generation, and very soon not a domestic hearth in Britain will be free from our influence."

"It is grand," said sister Martha, pursuing the train of her own thoughts, "to be one in so great a scheme. We have everything to gain by proselyting, and nothing to lose. Sir Allan McAlpine's

conversion will be 10,000% a-year to our community, and Lady Anne's above 80,000%. That is very encouraging! Besides those pupils in the governess department, there are above two hundred of our scholars out in every imaginable capacity, who do our work well, and are warranted as 'perfect treasures.' Several are in booksellers' shops recommending our own publications as the best antidotes to Romanism; but the system of family espionage answers best, therefore we go out as Protestant sick-nurses and nursery-maids. Several act the part of being converts to Protestantism, and those ladies who fancy they have been the means of converting another, are so flattered at their own success, that they often afterwards become an easy prey to our emissaries."

Lady Anne having now joined Beatrice, without the Lady Abbess, whispered that they must positively make sister Martha lead them into the chapel, where one of the nuns was about to be anathematized for eating food when she was ordered to fast, having been detected in the act of devouring raw vegetables, like any hungry animal, in the garden. "I can almost sympathise with the poor thing," added Lady Anne. "Formerly food was to me like the air I breathe, that never occupied my thoughts except during the minute I eat it; but now, you can have no idea of the gnawing agony I feel at times, and how often Father Eustace has to make me do penance for having felt a craving to eat buttered-toast or even a bit of dry bread."

"Do you remember," said Beatrice, "the agonies of mind endured by that poor young Oxonian, Froude, who killed himself with useless austerities for imaginary guilt? One sin was that he had wished to eat a morsel of cold goose. How much better to have satisfied his appetite and thought no more about it!"

On the floor of the chapel a black cloth had been carefully spread, adorned in the centre with a white cross, and the smell of medicated incense was almost intoxicating. When Lady Anne stole in, followed by Beatrice, the candles on the altar were at that very moment extinguished by Father Eustace, who was pronouncing in a sepulchral tone before a glittering crucifix, as if his tongue was almost frozen with horror, a long, gloomy, and most awful anathema on the trembling culprit, a young nun of most emaciated aspect, after which he raised on high for a moment the lighted torch he held in his hand, which he dashed on the ground so that the flame became extinguished. It was a scene most exciting to the senses, the passions, and the imaginations of unaccustomed persons, but the nuns began immediately counting their beads, and looking carelessly around them.

Lady Anne and sister Martha, with a thrill of horror, left the chapel, passing on the way out several chests which stood open to receive gifts. They were followed by Beatrice, who felt as if she had witnessed some secret Hindoo rite; and when they were walking hurriedly at the end of a long narrow corridor which presented

a most chilling, forlorn, and desolate aspect, Lady Anne stopped to inquire where it led to.

"Nowhere," answered sister Martha, evidently as anxious as a London policeman to make them "move on." "That passage is quite disused, except for invalids, when we have any."

The speaker looked somewhat confused, and was impatiently hurrying them onwards, when Lady Anne, in her own pretty wilful way, threw her arm round the waist of Beatrice, seized her hand, and exclaimed with laughing vivacity, "The very place for a Polka!" Gaily defying sister Martha to stop her, she sung a lively air, and danced off with Beatrice to the farthest end of the corridor, where leaning on a closed door, laughing, chatting, and breathless, she looked the very picture of beautiful girlish frolic and heedless good-humour. Scarcely, however, had she finished a jesting remark to Beatrice on the evident alarm of sister Martha at this unexpected escapade, before her smiles were suddenly banished by the sound of a low deep groan which evidently proceeded from that room on the door of which they were leaning. It was again repeated in a tone of greater anguish than before, and a low anxious voice was heard to say, in a tone of trembling apprehension: "Do I once more hear the voice of strangers? oh, help a wretched prisoner! All my friends believe me dead! All around are my enemies! My very name is changed! I am utterly lost and forgotten! Be generous and help a helpless being! Long years have passed away, and still I am here. Give information, I am utterly and hopelessly crushed. Oh, let me be released!"

Lady Anne stood petrified with horror, while Beatrice, though trembling and aghast, hurriedly endeavoured to open the door, which was both locked and barred. Sister Martha now flew like lightning to seize Beatrice by the hand, saying, in a tone of suppressed agitation, "Come away, or she may burst out and do us mischief!"

"Sister Martha, you lie in saying so; but they will believe you," said the prisoner, in a tone of heart-broken despondency. "Speak one kind word to me, strangers, before you go! Even if I am mad, say you pity me. I have forgotten the voice of sympathy, and would be comforted by hearing it once again. Death alone can release me, unless you do. I have much to tell—secrets that ought not to die with me!"

"She will certainly break loose—she has done so often!" exclaimed sister Martha, affecting the terror which Beatrice, who fixed on her a steady penetrating gaze, perceived she did not really feel. "Sister Rachel ought to be in a strait waistcoat. You should hear her battering frantically against the door, as she will do, with all the strength of desperation! If you remain here, her hideous language, her wild discordant shrieks, and her threats of vengeance, would make you thankful, indeed, to me for taking you away. Come, instantly!"

Lady Anne, pale with agitation, and shaking in every limb,

allowed sister Martha to lead her away, and Beatrice having managed for a single minute to elude the vigilant eye of her cicerone contrived hurriedly to push under the door a card, on which she had written clandestinely with her pencil some words of promise, of sympathy, and of consolation. Beatrice heard a deep sob through the door as she left it in pursuit of her companions, and then all was quiet as death, while her little manœuvre had been so instantaneously completed that no one could guess she had held any communication with the prisoner, as the watchful eye of sister Martha was chiefly engrossed by Lady Anne's more active movements.

"It is much better for our poor maniac, and for every one else, that this unfortunate sister Rachel should be tenderly watched," observed sister Martha, assuming a tone of composed gentleness, and of most contemptuous pity; "we thus prevent her doing mischief to herself and others, in body and soul."

"Yet surely the most wretched maniac might have friends of former and better days who should gain access to her!" said Beatrice hastily; but seeing sister Martha look disconcerted and angry, she at once resolved to hide the deep interest she felt in this solitary captive until circumstances enabled her to make some effort for her relief. She appeared, therefore, absorbed in contemplating the red centre of a moss-rose in her hand, and took no part in a dissertation which followed between sister Martha and Lady Anne, on the subject of lunacy and its treatment, believing in her own mind that this was a case of causing insanity, rather than of curing it. The fervent appeal of that prisoner for help still rung in her ears, and should not be in vain; but what help could reach any one within the iron bars of a convent? If the unfortunate captive had friends, they now believed her dead; or if she had been kidnapped into this den unknown to them, those who did miss her might vainly have advertised in every newspaper throughout Scotland, every day of every week for a year, for no inmate of that prison-house would have betrayed the secret of where she was incarcerated. Beatrice thought with secret emotions of sympathy how that weary captive must have devoured her tears alone for years in unknown imprisonment; and as these thoughts crowded into her mind, the whole firmness and benevolence of her nature seemed at once roused into action. Meanwhile, though making a flurried endeavour to look quite unconcerned, her earnest resolution was that no stone should be unturned to release, with Lady Edith's advice and assistance, the object of her profound interest and anxious sympathy.

"For hers had been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd and barr'd—forbidden fare."

"Pray mention nothing of what you have seen," whispered sister Martha, very earnestly. "You know in our order we all assume

characteristic names. Mine is 'the Mother of Charity,' and our lady abbess calls herself the 'Mother of Mercy,' but she caused me to be frightfully scourged the last time that a secret was discovered through my inadvertence. I am in general cautious to excess in speaking to any one about anything; very silent, as you see, and circumspect; but how it happened I cannot tell, some secret by some means transpired, and I was blamed. They dragged me out of bed last week, and the Mother of Mercy herself pulled me along the floor, by the hair, into a dungeon, kicked me several times, and left me there fainting. For two days I got no food; my hair was tied to nails fastened in the wall, so that I could not sleep for the pain, and I remained in cold and darkness, with bruises on my chest as large as the palm of my hand, and only my night-dress on for a week. How anything like a secret could come out through me, I never can guess, for no one is so cautious and silent as myself—careful even to a fault. I do certainly tire of silence sometimes, when shut up for twenty days alone, with my face to a whitewashed wall. It may be wrong to say so, but I do weary, and almost envy the criminals in jail, for they can talk once a day to the turnkey. We are particularly forbid to have any friendships or preferences among ourselves, but quarrels are always winked at, and I think sister Dorcas invented the whole story to spite me for having let out a secret of hers. It was the greatest mistake to suspect me, as I never speak to anybody when I can help it. Never! But I desire to be like brother Juniper, of the order of St. Francis, who welcomed all insults and injuries as he would the most costly gems."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"The face was young still, but its happy look
 Was gone; the cheek had lost its colour, and
 The lip its smile; the light that once had play'd
 Like sunshine in those eyes was quenched and dim,
 For tears had wasted it." L. E. L.

THE next morning dawned upon that day on which Miss Turton, after a lifetime of frivolous selfishness, was to receive the last consolation to her vanity, in publicly retiring, like some eminent actress, from public life, amidst torrents of applause; and the ceremony of her installation as a nun among the pale sisterhood of St. Ignatia was to take place with extraordinary splendour. Dressed as a bride, she appeared in a rich brocaded white silk, trimmed round the skirt with festoons of Honiton lace, looped up with bunches of white jessamine and lily of the valley. Head-dress, a wreath of orange flowers and diamonds; these jewels being the

property of the convent, and lent out, like a theatrical wardrobe, for such occasions. The magnificent dress, worn only on this occasion, was to be confiscated, immediately after the ceremony, for the benefit of the institution, and all the beautiful presents made to Miss Turton by her various friends were to follow.

"Well," said sister Martha to Beatrice, "do you not, at this moment, envy our new sister?"

"But all her moments are not to be like this moment of feverish excitement," replied Beatrice. "There are years to follow; during which I should prefer being my own property, and to have my own belongings."

"Yes," whispered Lady Anne, unable entirely to suppress a laugh. "Poor Miss Turton cannot keep so much as her silver thimble, which is to be exchanged for one of iron. Even the miniature portrait of that imaginary captain in the navy, her last admirer, supposed to have been drowned in undiscovered seas, is forfeited! Poor dear Miss Turton! all her comfortable little affections must now be laid aside. She has worked up her enthusiasm to an extremity of self-sacrifice, and told me yesterday, on an experience, you know, of only twenty-four hours' notice, that she never knew happiness before; but what will she say in twenty-four years? She meant, in a general way, to lead a St. Ignatian life of humility and mortification; but fancy her horror on coming to particulars, and only then discovering that all the nuns wash together in the same basin, and dry themselves with a public towel. My worthy governess (may she never live to repent this step!) was prepared to undergo the sort of poetical crust of bread that we young ladies all feel ready to live upon, either with the lover we prefer to marry or in a convent like this; but only perceive the consternation of poor fastidious Miss Turton, when told that the nuns, on alternate days, wear each other's dresses. Thus, what old sister Martha, a mere mass of disease, wears to-day, Miss Turton must equip herself in to-morrow."

"She, who used to wear a fresh muslin dress every morning!" said Beatrice; "and there is half a foot of difference in their height!"

"Fancy Miss Turton, who was so particular about her hair, being obliged to use the universal comb, too!" added Lady Anne, in a tone of irrepressible laughter, while she gracefully tossed back her own clustering ringlets; "and she dare not wash her feet without express permission from the Lady Abbess. Do you see that image of St. Bridget on the black marble altar, veiled, crowned, and splendidly adorned with variously coloured jewels? Well, Miss Turton was allowed to kiss its feet this morning, and to dress it. She was as happy on the occasion as any little school-girl with her doll during the holidays. I gave her, some time ago, my last court dress, which you see she has put upon St. Bridget, and those velvet flowers were what I wore once at a fancy ball"——

At this moment the great convent-bell tolled, when every Papist present instantly dropped on his knees, rapidly muttering Latin prayers to the patron saint of the institution. Miss Turton, looking much flushed and prodigiously excited, made herself very conspicuous by her pantomime of devotion before this concourse of spectators, and having practised over the whole scene of her profession in various rehearsals before a mirror, she afterwards went through the whole ceremony with a theatrical grace worthy of Grisi or Jenny Lind. After taking the vows, and going through a rapid preliminary of most marvellous ceremonies, with Mrs. Lorraine acting as god-mother, Miss Turton, according to etiquette, knelt humbly before the bishop, a very fine looking old man, begging an admission to reside in the convent of St. Ignatia, whence she never more desired to have egress, till she left it for the grave. She was next led by sister Martha and three other nuns to inspect her own coffin, on which her new conventual name was engraved, "sister Agnes."

Miss Turton then assisted to carry her own coffin forward to the chapel, while Bishop Cameron distinctly enumerated all the pleasures she was called on to relinquish; and she listened in an attitude that should have been modelled in marble for a tombstone. When this was concluded, sister Agnes in reply, loudly but lugubriously repeated, in a perfect excitement of affectation, "I resign them—I resign them all."

Sister Martha performed the part of bridesmaid at this melancholy bridal, and assisted sister Agnes, who now assumed the conventual dress of black serge, and suffered the loss of her few remaining ringlets. Miss Turton then threw her white satin dress on the stone steps of the altar, and theatrically stamped on it, trampling the lace and flowers contemptuously under her feet, to represent her abhorrence of every earthly vanity; and she then laid herself gracefully down in the coffin, which was immediately covered with a black pall. The nuns then, each holding a large wax taper, chanted the funeral service over her in a low monotonous dirge. They strewed her over with flowers, and sung hymns in Latin over Miss Turton, deceased.

It was to be her last public exhibition, therefore Miss Turton seemed resolved to make the most of it. This ceremony was closed by the Lady Abbess, *ci-devant* Mrs. Lorraine, when Miss Turton emerged from the living tomb, endowing her newly-risen daughter "sister Agnes" with a crucifix and a rosary. She was next embraced by each of the sisterhood, who placed a silver crown on her head. Then Bishop Cameron gave her his benediction, and at length took leave of the new nun, saying, "Fortunate and happy daughter! may your years, days, and months roll on here unheeded, as the summer stream glides smoothly past a child, sporting innocently on its banks!"

"As soon as a nun takes the veil she chooses her confessor," whis

pered sister Martha, in a gossiping tone, to Beatrice. "There are desperate quarrels amongst us; for we have nothing else to think of but the little offences that are given and taken. We all have portraits in our cells either of Father Eustace or Father Ambrose, and we are divided into two contending parties,—the Eustacians and the Ambrosians."

"A very important schism amongst you!" observed Beatrice. "You seem alike the Vestal virgins of a heathen temple. And to which of the opposing sects do you belong?"

"I am one of those who think Father Eustace's penances too rigid; but in that I may be quite wrong. The poor girl who accompanied sister Agnes here last week seems already more than half dead. She is obliged by our confessor to stand all night in the open air in order to overcome sleep, and I heard him telling her about St. Peter of Alcantara, who during forty years slept but one hour and a half each night. She will obstinately persist in denying* that the new robe given last week to Father Eustace was her making, though ordered to say it was. The fact is, she never saw it in her life; but obedience is the first of duties, therefore as a punishment she has the penance of prostration for a whole day, and must sit all next week with her face to a damp white-washed wall, speaking to nobody."

"Poor, misguided Bessie! will nothing open her eyes?" exclaimed Beatrice; "so lately with the bloom of happy girlhood on her lovely cheek!"

"She will evidently not live many weeks, and is said to be nearly blind already. She has certainly lost one eye, and Father Eustace makes her stand for hours with her hands bound between her shoulders, and her face bowed down; or she lies on ashes, with her head between her knees. Sometimes, too, she beats the ground with her forehead, and her cheeks are already furrowed by continual streams of tears. Poor thing! It is lucky for nuns that they do not live always, and very few of Father Eustace's votaries last more than five or ten years."

"He is a most mysterious tyrant, and an uncomfortable person to converse with," said Beatrice; "his unfortunate eyes are always thrown on the ground, or under the table, or anywhere but at the person he speaks to."

"Of course," replied sister Martha, in a low, confiding voice; "he practises the sanctification of the eyes, like St. Bernard, who, after being a novice during an entire year, never knew that his own cell was vaulted, nor did he ever observe that there were but three windows in the church of the monastery where he spent his novitiate. St. Lewis of Gonzaga never was known to look in the face of his own mother."

"How very stupid and unfeeling!" exclaimed Beatrice, indignantly. "But what pride is so great as spiritual pride!"

"Perhaps you are not far wrong," answered Lady Anne, in a tone of more than common reflection. "Certainly, sister Agnes expects to acquire such a preeminence in holiness that hereafter her name shall only be spoken on bended knees. After all, perhaps I shall act better without her influence. She certainly had a spite at poor dear mamma, and made her life utterly miserable of late. I begin now to like your notions of religion better than Miss Turton's. Any she had depend chiefly on music, poetry, taste, and impulse."

"Yes; and how often among beautiful flowers like these an adder is concealed!" continued Beatrice. "I could almost thank you, Lady Anne, for this glimpse into convent life, which I should never willingly have ventured to take. Seeing is indeed believing! Nothing short of such a visit could have fully revealed to me the evils and dangers, the absurdities and follies of Popery. I certainly felt a sort of gloomy curiosity to know the worst; but all my anticipations have been exceeded by witnessing here the wild dreams of enthusiastic devotion, the terrors of superstition, and the petty despotism of a little secluded world, where all is misery or degradation, despair or death. Father Eustace would persuade us (but I trust he will not succeed with you) that religion is his accomplice, in recommending you a life of solitary idleness, of voluntary austerities, of moral suicide, which would hurry you into an early grave, or make you such an idiot as poor sister Martha and her companions, who lose the faculty of knowing right from wrong, as they are never allowed to judge and act either way for themselves, and are often driven to deeds of immorality which would amaze any honest mind with that Protestant superfluity, a conscience."

"I shall not venture rashly on choosing either the bridal or the conventual veil," said Lady Anne, with a relapse into her former heedless vivacity. "The very sameness and wearisomeness of a life here would, as you say, or seem to say, biologize my mind into idiotey."

"Yes, Lady Anne. May a brighter destiny await you than the solitude and gloom of a cloister!" said Beatrice warmly. "With your brilliant spirits, bright talents, and energetic mind, let not the spring-time of your felicity be blighted by the creeping palsy of superstition; but dare to be happy, and avoid the phantoms which Popery substitutes for reality. You and my old companion, Allan, are made for happiness, and why not enjoy it together?"

Lady Anne coloured and looked down; but a smile dimpled round her mouth, and she was if possible more cordially confidential to Beatrice that evening than she had ever dared to be under the blighting influence of Miss Turton and Father Eustace. "By nature," she said, "my governess found me very ready for her Popish teaching. Everything that I had to learn, I wished, like any young Jesuit, to be told, and to see every difficulty removed by my teacher from my path. Miss Turton forbid me, under desperate penalties, to think of anything that she did not explain, and I was

only too happy indolently to acquiesce in whatever she chose to say, repeating her opinions like a parrot, rather than have the trouble of forming my own. It is so easy, you know, to gaze at an image, to count a score of beads, to be present when a distant priest mutters unintelligible litanies, and to repeat the same form endlessly over and over again myself. My poor little cramped and stunted mind seemed to me quite a giant of perfection, till I measured it beside yours; but now I can compare my own mutilated intellect to nothing but the 'Torso in Lord Elgin's marbles, with neither head, eyes, arms, nor legs, to act, or think, or see with. No faculty is cultivated in the Church of Rome but memory. We learn a creed by rote, not to be understood, but merely to be recapitulated."

It was not long before Lady Anne saw a specimen of those rather uncommon views of duty entertained by the Jesuit sisterhood. She was on the point of retiring to bed in her little solitary cell, and felt her position an interesting rehearsal of convent life, when, to her surprise, Mrs. Lorraine, Lady Abbess of St. Ignatia, entered with cautious step, as if afraid of being overheard, and told her that the community felt most grateful for her present visit, and the more so, as she had brought Miss Farinelli, whom it was of the greatest consequence that they should detain, whether willingly or not, within their walls for a fortnight. "Indeed so urgent is the case, that, truth to say, I have no choice, nor can I give you any. Stay she must."

"Impossible! quite impossible! I had difficulty enough in bringing her here for one night," exclaimed Lady Anne, almost breathless with consternation. "My honour is pledged that she shall be with Lady Edith to-morrow. You make me feel quite all-over-ish with fright."

"No matter! You act under my authority, therefore the responsibility is mine. The order to detain Miss Farinelli comes from our bishop, who cannot do wrong. I have let Lady Edith know that she need not expect her *protégée* for some time. She believes that Miss Farinelli has set out suddenly for Spain in search of her unknown relatives, and indeed, if she prove refractory, that must be her ultimate destination."

"But," said Lady Anne in an undertone of alarm, "I never meant to betray Miss Farinelli. I cannot and will not do it. I could die first. Lady Edith shall fetch a warrant to search this house from the roof to the cellar."

"That cannot be. Lady Edith has no legal right over Miss Farinelli, who comes here to-day, or goes abroad to-morrow, without any one having a right in law to hinder her. The fact is, my daughter, you will greatly impede the advantage of our Church if you do not consent to keep it secret, for a fortnight, where Miss Farinelli is. No one saw her depart in your carriage but those who were in the plot; but now that our bird is caged, do you think there is the thing on earth that could influence me to betray the

secret of Miss Farinelli being here, when her remaining is so important to the Church? Thousands a-year depend upon this little manœuvre, and it shall positively be completed. Father Eustace must lay his injunction upon you to obey, and you know the greatest of all virtues is obedience. No matter whether you think an order right or wrong, you must not judge, but obey. The more your confessor's command is opposed to your private judgment, revolting to your personal feelings, or wounding to your individual conscience, the greater your merit in being a mere machine. If nature says it is sin, and if the law of God says it is sin, but if Father Eustace says it must be done, then it must and shall. The responsibility is his, not yours."

"But you cannot mean it!" exclaimed Lady Anne almost hysterically. "You would frighten me out of my wits if I had any wits to be frightened out of."

Mrs. Lorraine turned away with so determined an air, that Lady Anne felt intimidated from any further remonstrance, but not the less determined rather to part with her head than to leave the convent without Beatrice, and never to take the pledge, as Mrs. Lorraine evidently intended she should, to mislead Lady Edith respecting the place to which Beatrice had been, through her own jesting inadvertency, decoyed. That any information had been sent by the abbess to Lady Edith she did not now believe. At this moment Lady Anne, in her hot indignation at having been cajoled into becoming the heedless instrument of so deep a plot, felt as if the scales were falling from her eyes,—as if her chain had snapped into fragments, and the iron bondage of Romanism were at an end. She saw the iniquity of that system which acknowledged no rule of truth or honour. The power of natural conscience, which for ever survives amidst the ruins of our fallen nature, once more asserted itself, the remembrances of Protestant principle appeared in all their brightness to her memory, and clasping her hands over her eyes, as one awaking from a dream, she mentally exclaimed, "My mother's prayers have been heard. Yes, I am preserved from the snare. I feel awake and in my right mind. Truly a man who teaches lying and treachery, like Father Eustace, may turn his eyes towards heaven, but his steps are towards hell itself. I shall not advance with him another pace, or obey him for another hour, if such be the use he would make of his soul-enthraling authority. In promising implicit obedience to a superior, one would need to ascertain what that superior, when he has riveted his fetters on the soul, will then enjoin; or it may be an outrage on every law human and divine. What can I do to secure soonest the release of my dearest Beatrice, or even to be quite sure of my own escape? Dear mamma, how she warned me against all this double-dealing and deceit! but every one must buy her own experience in life, and dearly some of us pay for it. I know she will be quite in a way about my coming here. Not that she ever is, or ever was really

angry—perhaps it would be better for me had she been less indulgent; and oh, how often Father Eustace has said that the nearer the tie to a heretic, the more dangerous her influence, and the greater my merit in steeling my heart against every such old association. My own mother! Your child is restored to you—and how happy we shall now be together! How I long to tell you all, and to ask your forgiveness of the past!”

“What a fearful superstition, which subsists on deception, and on the rupture of every domestic attachment!” exclaimed Beatrice shuddering, when Lady Anne had with grief and loathing confessed all her penitence and perplexity. “Yet I never look now at the most virtuous and talented of human beings without thinking, ‘there is in you the germ of that corruption which might, under Popish enticements, be led gradually onwards to all the horrors of Jesuitism.’ It begins with an apparently innocent love of processions, flowers, music, perfumes, painted glass windows, stone altars, wax candles, and fairy tales; these all stand at the porch to entice the curiosity of heedless wanderers; but the ‘Chamber of Horrors’ is concealed within. If I am indeed to be detained a prisoner within these walls, my prayers shall be for protection against myself as much as against any other danger; for as Lot’s wife was lost by forbidden curiosity, so do many now fall into the lowest depths of Romanism by being led on to contemplate these corruptions, which have an answering chord in the fallen nature of man.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“Wanderer, come to me;

Why didst thou ever leave me? Know’st thou all
I could have borne, and call’d it joy to bear,
For thy sake? Know’st thou, that thy voice had power
To shake me with a thrill of happiness,
By one kind tone? to fill mine eyes with tears
Of yearning love? And thou! oh thou didst throw
That crush’d affection back upon my heart;
Yet come to me—it died not!”—HEMANS.

WHEN Beatrice returned at night to her cell in the convent of St. Ignatia, she felt her position so strange and new, that it was long before she could compose her mind to sleep. She had, however, at last been wrapped in a profound slumber for an unknown period, when she suddenly awakened to the consciousness that a light was glimmering within the room. It seemed at first almost like a dream, but the next moment it became a certainty. She sat up, and silently drawing aside her curtain, a vision was before her quite equal in mystery and in beauty to any Popish legend she ever read or heard of.

A figure stood near the door, clad in white draperies, the face muffled up like that of a corpse, and carrying a light which seemed to spread a halo all around. Beatrice almost screamed with apprehension, for it slowly and cautiously approached the bed with a gliding inaudible step, and the little that could be seen of the countenance was pallid as death.

Beatrice, with an impulse of girlish terror, tremblingly hid her head under the bed-clothes, while her tongue clove to the root of her mouth, and she could almost hear the violent beating of her heart. Here then was a real Popish apparition, she thought; or was it not rather some trick to terrify her into believing in them? Indignant at the idea of being thus perhaps imposed upon, Beatrice determined to face the worst, and at once uncovering her eyes, she sat up erect, made a desperate effort to be courageous, and looking full at the startling apparition, beheld the wan and wasted countenance of Bessie McDonald, who silently placed her finger on her lips, and pointed with a warning look towards the door, then advancing, she whispered in so low a tone as to be almost inaudible,—

“Rise, Miss Farinelli—rise quickly. They are going to detain you here by force,—one hope of escape remains for you, and only one. Dress immediately, while I go to call up Lady Anne. If it cost me my life, you shall be free. I owe more than life to Lady Edith and you. Make haste. We must be quick, or be too late. In half an hour all chance would be over.”

Beatrice, bewildered with astonishment and perplexity, still lost not a moment in hurrying on her dress, and was joined in a few moments by Lady Anne, in a fever of agitation and excitement at this most unexpected summons. Bessie then explained, in a low strange whisper of unmitigated terror, that from the moment of Beatrice entering at the gates of St. Ignatia, she had perceived there was a scheme in agitation to detain Miss Farinelli there, but that her suspicions had been turned into certainties that day, by her receiving orders from Father Eustace to assist in the plot for transforming his guests into prisoners.

While Lady Anne stood aghast with indignant consternation at this intelligence, Bessie added, that, as Robert Carre was at Inverness on farming business, she had conveyed notice to him of the difficulty they were in, and requested him to bring round Lady Anne's carriage quietly to a place she indicated near the chapel. She then proposed that Beatrice and Lady Anne should join the procession to prayers at the hour of *nocturns*, in dresses which she had brought, similar to those of the nuns, and, favoured by the intense darkness of the night, reach the gates unobserved. Bessie added, that the porteress being ill, she had been appointed to attend upon her, and had already abstracted the keys for the purpose of liberating them.

“You accompany us, of course?” said Beatrice: and seeing Bessie

hesitate, she added, "I do not stir a step without you! You have been kept in a state of most unnatural delusion, but now surely the spell is broken. Now surely you will escape with us; now surely you will restore yourself to home and to happiness."

"To happiness! Impossible!—but to home,—oh, how gladly, if they will receive me back, broken in heart and in health as I am, and penniless!"—exclaimed Bessie, making a mournful attempt to choke back the tears that nearly suffocated her. "Will my uncle ever see me again?"

"Bessie, you know perfectly how that kind old uncle will welcome you," replied Beatrice, eagerly. "Is the sun never to shine again if clouds pass across it for a time? Come, we are ready."

The convent bell now sonorously reverberated through the echoing passages; and as the long procession of nuns—many among them fragile girls, torn from their slumbers to endure the chill of a winter's night—darkly issued from the door, three persons added themselves to the number; but no sooner were they safely in the cloisters than they disappeared behind a pillar, and hurried, under shadow of the long lime avenue, to the gates. With difficulty these were opened by the trembling hands of Bessie, and in a moment, Robert Carre, having hurriedly handed them into the carriage, got up himself behind, and they drove off.

"Away—away—away. We are safe!" exclaimed Bessie, in a tone of the deepest thankfulness. "But you little know, Miss Farinelli, what a danger it has been. All within those walls are bound to betray every secret they can overhear, and we might have been discovered. That poor nun they call a maniac told me much. I heard her cries one day, and stole in the night-time to her cell. For twelve long years she has been their prisoner. And oh, Miss Farinelli, when you hear who she is,—if I dare tell that secret,—what then will your feelings be?"

"Tell me! Speak!" exclaimed Beatrice, who saw from the tone of Bessie that something very strange was to be revealed. "Who is that unfortunate prisoner?"

"When you were cast ashore a helpless child at Clanmarina, you had an attendant. She was a trusty Protestant, who had been the devoted companion of your deceased mother, and had promised your father in his dying hour that you should be brought to Clanmarina, and delivered safely to those he had appointed your Protestant guardians."

"Bessie! go on! Who were these?—tell me all instantly! Oh, how strange and bewildering! Who were my parents? Tell me, and I shall bless you."

"The last Lord Eaglescain had a second son, whom he disowned for having married a Spanish lady. She died five years after your birth. He had been himself in declining health, and did not long survive; but his last act was to place you in the charge of Theresa da Hosta, your cousin, with all the papers which would prove you

entitled to the property here, and to a Spanish estate from your mother."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Beatrice, in breathless astonishment "it cannot be!"

"Perfectly true," continued Bessie, a wan smile stealing over her lovely face, at the good news she was communicating. "That ship as it entered the little harbour of Clanmarina, being wrecked, you were, by a strange coincidence, thrown into the hands of Sir Evan, the very man into whose care Theresa had promised to consign you; but she herself most unfortunately fell to the charge of Father Eustace, who soon discovered that if your rights became known, his obedient tool, Lord Eaglescairn, might be deprived of that fortune and estate to which he then believed himself entitled, and which Father Eustace himself could now squander at his own pleasure and for his own purposes."

"Go on," said Lady Anne, impatiently! "How the plot thickens! I never read a more romantic romance!"

"It indeed became so at last," continued Bessie, rapidly. "The papers were all taken from Theresa, and she was offered countless wealth to embark with the Spanish crew for her native country, leaving you, an unknown foundling, behind; but her strong Protestant conscience judged for itself that this would be wrong. She would listen to no terms but the restoration of her papers, and that you should be brought up by Sir Evan, a Protestant, with all your rights acknowledged. This was evidently not for the interest of the Popish Church, and therefore Theresa da Hosta has been a martyr in that dungeon for twelve years, branded as a lunatic, and maltreated as if she were a dangerous one. Any day she might have obtained her liberty if she would go to Spain and if she would relinquish your rights, but her conscience told her she had once accepted the sacred trust of a dying parent, and you see how conscientiously she has endured the slow consuming torture of years to fulfil her duty. The abbess calls Theresa's cell 'Rome,' and if any one ever inquired for her, as Sir Evan once did, they answered that 'She is gone to Rome.'"

Beatrice covered her face with her hands and wept with overwhelming emotion, while Lady Anne eagerly exclaimed, "But tell me, is not the mother of Miss Farinelli now living near the chapel of St. Bridget at Eaglescairn? Lady Edith herself recognised her likeness to the person cast ashore."

"I told Theresa this, and she believes it to be a popish sister of her own, brought over from a convent at Corunna to personate her. The object of Father Eustace in trying to detain you now in this nunnery is, that Lord Eaglescairn feels himself dying. The sight of you has long awakened him to a wretched sense of repentance without reformation. He confesses to Father Eustace every day, who knows his crime already, who instigated it, and who gives him unbounded absolution for it. Father Eustace tells him it matters

nothing to have obeyed the Church ninety-nine times if he rebelled the hundredth; but still death is a close monitor, and will not always be silenced or kept off even by the most plausible confessor. Lord Eaglescain has dropped some hints of his guilt to his own son, who is endeavouring to unravel the secret, which he is resolved to make known though it would render himself a beggar. Lord Iona is incapable, however, of popish expediency, and longs to see justice done, if he only knew how. The priests are in constant terror that Lord Eaglescain may send for you in his last hour to betray the whole secret, and therefore he is now beset so assiduously, that his own son never gains access to him alone. He cannot survive above a few days, or if he could, means would be taken to prevent that; and on his demise, every shilling he can dispose of, every piece of plate, every tea-spoon, every picture, every jewel, and every book, goes to Father Eustace for the Church."

"It is a very clear sweep, when a Jesuit takes the business in hand," said Lady Anne, shuddering. "What a narrow escape we have all had, and what a blaze of light is thrown on your mysterious history! It has come like a flash of lightning! I long now to tell dear mamma that her prayers for me are heard, and that the bird has escaped from the snare."

" 'The visit o'er, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation home.' "

It was on the earliest dawn of a bright and beautiful morning, though the air was fiercely cold, when the travellers came in sight of Eaglescain castle, with feelings it might be possible to imagine, but quite impossible to describe. Lady Anne, however, the least agitated, was the only talker, and her chief subject was to anticipate the joy with which she should be once more in the arms of her indulgent mother, and once more feel an entire confidence between them restored.

But few of the shutters had yet been opened in the old Castle, and Lady Anne, unwilling to create any disturbance while Lord Eaglescain was in such an extremity of illness, caused her carriage to draw up beside the glass door which entered at her mother's sitting-room, and which she was surprised to find wide open. Lady Anne, pointing for her two companions to sit down, smilingly approached the inner door, which led to Lady Stratharden's bedroom, and with a delightful anticipation of all the explanations she was about to give, of all the joy she was about to cause, and of all the glad affection with which she was about to be welcomed, Lady Anne, nodding with her own happy smile to Beatrice, disappeared, exclaiming, "What shall I say to dear mamma! But I never could study a part, and must leave that to the impulse of the moment. What a delightful meeting we shall have! I never was so long out of her sight before; and how much I have missed her!"

It might be two minutes, but it seemed not a moment, before Beatrice was startled off her seat by the sound, in Lady Stratharden's room, of a loud and piercing shriek, followed by a heavy fall. She rushed forward, threw open the door, and, in an agony of haste and alarm, nearly fell over the body of Lady Anne, stretched perfectly insensible on the floor. There was a silence in the room that might be felt. It was the silence of death; for when Beatrice looked up, she saw a sight that froze her very blood—the lifeless corpse of Lady Stratharden, stretched on the bed, laid out for interment, and surrounded with all the gloomy paraphernalia of the grave,—the snowy shroud, the velvet pall, the glimmering lights.

It was so solemn and overwhelming a sight, that Beatrice, cold as ice with the shock, remained for several minutes immovable, and almost turned to stone. She could neither speak nor move, but her eyes remained fastened on the dead face of Lady Stratharden, with an almost vacant gaze. That venerable countenance had something truly majestic in its silent repose. It bore the stamp of mental suffering, impressed on every wasted feature, and she carried still suspended round her neck, dear even in death itself, the enamelled miniature of Lady Anne, which the heart-broken mother always wore, and on which her tears seemed scarcely dry. A Bible lay still open on the table—the brightest sunshine poured its gorgeous light on this mournful scene; and Beatrice, while sprinkling water on the sufferer's face and rubbing her hands, awaited in silent speechless horror, almost fearing the moment when Lady Anne must at last recover to the dreadful consciousness of her misfortune.

The whole agony seemed to return at once. Lady Anne, with a groan like death itself, suddenly sat up, and grasping her long hair, and clenching her hands on each side of her forehead, gazed wildly around, while Beatrice raised her up and tried to lead her from the room;—but this was not to be. Lady Anne stood still for a moment after she had risen, while a hundred sounds seemed ringing in her ears, and a hundred figures flitting before her eyes. The blood had rushed from her cheeks, as she riveted her hands over her face in unutterable anguish, and gently pushing Beatrice aside, she advanced to the bed, clasped the cold hand of Lady Stratharden in her own, and kissed her marble forehead. Lady Anne's grief was too deep for tears, but, as she gazed long and mournfully on the rigid features of death, a choking sob broke from her lips, and then in a voice trembling with grief, and scarcely audible, she exclaimed, "My own mother! I have broken your heart, and never now can ask your forgiveness—never forgive myself! This is the welcome I deserved."

Again Lady Anne, with heart-torn grief, solemnly kissed that venerable countenance, and seemed as if she were about to sink insensible on the bed. Beatrice was hastening to ring for help, when the door noiselessly opened, and the calm benevolent countenance of Lady Edith appeared there. Her face was pale and wan, but

she looked mournfully composed, as she advanced towards Beatrice, and silently clasped her hand. The scene around was too awful for the indulgence of any vehement emotion, and astonished as Beatrice felt at the appearance of her beloved benefactress again in that house, not a word was uttered on either side. They exchanged a single glance of mutual surprise as well as of mutual affection, and then turned their whole thoughts and their whole sympathy to Lady Anne, who might have been supposed insensible, but for the visible trembling of her whole frame. It shook with agony, yet not a sound proceeded from her lips, not a tear relieved her burning eyes, as she gazed at the livid face and the venerable white hair of the mother whose kind heart she had broken.

"My dear young friend," whispered Lady Edith, taking with mournful kindness a hand that seemed cold as death itself, "I have a message of comfort from your mother. Those lips can speak no more, but the last words they uttered were for you. 'She being dead yet speaketh.' Her last request was, that during the first shock of this event, and in this very room, her body being present, though her soul be departed, you would hear her message as a voice from the grave itself."

Lady Anne solemnly bent her head, placed her trembling hand on that of her deceased mother, kissed her cold cheek, and unable to raise her eyes said, in a low suppressed whisper,—*"Tell me all. Tell me the worst at once."* A momentary convulsion passed over her face, and she added,—*"If it were my death-warrant I deserve no better."*

The strong grief of Lady Anne became soothed while she gazed on the benevolent countenance of Lady Edith, and listened to the tones eloquent with sympathy and sorrow in which she added,—

"Your mother when I came here could scarcely articulate, but she desired me to give you her most heartfelt love and forgiveness."

"My mother! my dear kind mamma!" exclaimed Lady Anne, in tones that seemed more gasped than spoken, *"Nature tells me now the truth. Yes! I broke your heart. Oh, when I think of the prayers and tears I cost you! Father Eustace made me delirious with vanity, promising that I should be canonized as a saint when disowning the first and dearest of all earthly duties."*

"I was awakened at midnight on Tuesday," said Lady Edith, in a low suppressed voice, and evidently anxious not to aggravate the bewildering grief of her young listener; *"a messenger had come from Eaglescairn, as your mother had been struck with palsy, and wished to see me instantly: I hurried here, and found that but a glimmering of life remained. Lady Stratharden had already exacted a solemn promise—almost an oath—from Lady Eaglescairn, that no Roman Catholic should enter this room until she were carried out of it; and yet you see, for the honour of that church, that they have decorated the room with Popish emblems, and give out that your mother died a papist. She left me the entire care of her*

remains, but Lady Eaglescairn has a right, of course, to adorn any room in her house as she pleases, therefore no one can interfere. Since your mother's death I have scarcely left her room night or day. It is the more to be lamented, therefore, that I was not here to soften the blow, when you so suddenly arrived, and were plunged at once into this most dismal scene."

Lady Edith became mournfully silent, while the heart of the sufferer relieved itself by many low incoherent lamentations, till at length the burst of grief exhausted itself; and again kissing the forehead of her venerated parent, Lady Anne silently looked at Lady Edith entreating that she would now proceed.

"Your mother made an effort which astonished even the doctors to speak the message distinctly, which in dying it was Lady Stratharden's last wish that her child should receive."

Lady Anne solemnly closed her eyes, and said with melancholy fervour, "I trust it tells me something I may do yet, to mark my repentance."

While Lady Edith paused a moment to recollect accurately the words she had to repeat, Lady Anne's colour changed from white to red, and from red to white, and she heaved a suffocating sigh, when Lady Edith began in accents of tender commiseration,—
"Your mother's message, Lady Anne, was this: 'Tell my child, the last tie I had to life, that for her sake I would willingly die, and that I cannot but hope my sudden death now is ordained to do her more good than my life could have done. Tell her to look on my face before the coffin is closed, and to imagine she hears me ask that for one year—one short year of the many yet to come, she will withdraw herself entirely from the influence of Father Eustace, and all who think or act with him. Tell Anne I could die in peace, not only resigned but happy, if she will give that year to calm, deliberate reading and reflection. She has been worked up to an unnatural delirium by the flatteries and by the terrors presented to her young mind.—Designing fortune-hunters such as Father Eustace are at work, with an almost magical influence, to rob my child of her inheritance, of her liberty, of her friends and of her conscience, as they have already robbed my Anne of her mother. Let her for a year, then, stand aloof from the possession of Father Eustace and his tribe, giving herself up to sober reflection, to rational society, and to fervent prayer.'"

When Lady Edith paused, her young auditor still continued to gaze earnestly as if she hoped to hear more from her kind monitress, who then added in a tone of solemn awe, "Your mother's voice now failed entirely, but she held out her feeble hand to me. Her eyes were turned upwards, evidently in most earnest prayer, and before many minutes had elapsed, she expired. No struggle took place, and only by finding her hand grow cold in my own, did I discover that she was dead. Your name was the last word on her dying lips."

Again Lady Anne clasped her hands over her face, but it was only for a moment, and then she slowly turned from gazing at the countenance of her dead mother, saying to Lady Edith, with deep emotion,—“All shall be as she desired. There shall not be a moment's hesitation or a single reserve. Lady Edith, my mother revered and loved you, as all must who ever knew you. Will you then receive her child as a funeral legacy into your own house? From this day let me not only obey the wishes she did express, but also those she would have spoken had they seemed possible. Will you give the kind shelter of your roof to an almost heart-broken orphan, and adopt a spoiled child as your own?”

Lady Anne threw herself into the extended arms of Lady Edith, and burst into a passion of tears. Long and almost frantically the young girl wept, but they were tears of nature and feeling that did her good, while Lady Edith from time to time whispered to the afflicted sufferer words of deep sympathy and of judicious consolation.

“I must not, cannot, will not be consoled,” said Lady Anne, next day, though her tears had already become those of less hopeless anguish, and her thoughts seemed less verging to despair. “My whole existence must now be centred in one feeling of the deepest compunction, yet I cling to a friend like you, who will not break the bruised reed.”

“My dear Lady Anne,” said Lady Edith, kindly, “there is at Rome an appointed official called ‘the Devil's Advocate,’ whose business it is, when a saint is about to be canonized, to show any cause he can, why the honoured individual does not merit so supernatural a distinction. You need not, however, exercise that office against yourself, or exaggerate your own fault. I believe it was your sincere desire to serve God, which first led you into the snare of those who set aside the whole domestic constitution as appointed by God for our good. It is evident that in every little family community, the father and mother are to be as monarchs, governing their children and servants with affection and authority. The unnatural usurpation of that sacred title ‘Father’ by a priest, is a total perversion of its meaning, and leads to mischief which cannot be named. The ladies who call themselves ‘Mother Superior’ have unjustly torn from another, as Father Eustace did from Lady Stratharden, the dearest privilege of nature, and fly directly in the face of Providence by doing so.”

“True,” said Lady Anne thoughtfully: “during one of my visits to the convent of St. Ignatia, a letter was given to sister Bridget, announcing the sudden death of her own mother; yet she was ordered to look and act as if nothing remarkable had occurred, and to pursue her ordinary avocations.”

“Of course! The extinction of every divinely implanted attachment is the main object of those Jesuits, who are now insinuating themselves secretly into every home in England; yet no man will

take warning, till the mine is blown up within his own house," observed Lady Edith. "The estrangement of husbands from their wives, of brothers from their sisters, of friends from their neighbours, is now in rapid but clandestine progress,—by books, by sermons, by secret agents, in the court and in the cottage; yet those who appointed a Board of Health to watch the progress of the cholera, keep no watch against that which will destroy both body and soul together."

"My poor mother saw it all, too late; and often in her sorrow for my estrangement used to remind me,—oh, how sadly!—of that text, 'If ye love not a brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?'" continued Lady Anne; "but from the moment I began to confess, the very power of thought or action seemed to leave me. I was under a spell, and nothing but the shock of this event could have broken it. Her death-knell has awakened me."

"For such a hope she was willing to die," said Lady Edith solemnly. "Certainly, Lady Anne, private confession is the main engine of papists for continuing to enslave their victims; and most diligently do they enforce it. I know for a positive fact that, very recently, within five miles of Westminster Abbey, a public platform was raised in a public street, adorned with crucifixes, images, and pictures. An Irish mob assembled there, with a moderate sprinkling of English intermixed—all drawn there by most blameable curiosity—and a portrait of the Virgin Mary, such as a very unskilful painter supposed her to have been, was carried round the crowd to be kissed. A priest then, in full canonicals, preached a sermon on the absolute necessity of confession. His words were taken down; and one of the anecdotes gravely told to that gaping multitude is well worth repeating."

"Let me hear it," said Lady Anne, on whose mind, though gnawed by the worm of a reproachful conscience, Lady Edith was producing the anodyne effect which by her conversation she intended.

"The popish legend was this," continued Lady Edith; "and in the year 1851, standing under the noble canopy of heaven, there was a London audience found capable of believing it!—A hermit, living alone in a distant forest, was considered so supremely holy, that pilgrims went in crowds to do homage, until he died, when it was determined to bury him as so eminent a saint deserved. He was interred, therefore, in the chancel of the nearest chapel, with honours worthy of a canonized saint; but when his votaries returned next day to morning prayers they discovered, with astonishment, that his coffin had risen again to the surface of the ground. Deeply impressed with this miracle, they moved the hermit's body to another part of the church and buried it again; but again it was found reproduced on the floor. It now occurred to his admirers that the hermit being so supremely holy, should be interred below the altar,

which was accordingly done; and there it was hoped he might rest in peace, in a place so suitable to his merit. On the contrary however, next day the obstinate coffin was not only up again, but wide open, and the dead saint sitting up in it. The multitude then humbly inquired wherefore it was that so good a man could not remain quietly in his grave; when the corpse at length opened its mouth and acknowledged, that in the hour of death one sin had been overlooked at confession; therefore that sin had not been forgiven; and far from deserving to be buried as a saint at the altar, he must be cast into unconsecrated ground, as a lost sinner, unconfessed, and therefore unpardoned."

"The popish religion is all things to all men; and these are the fairy tales prepared for ignorant wonder-seekers among the poorer classes," observed Lady Anne, reflectively. "Like Eve, who fell because of her curiosity, my delusion was begun by having my own idle curiosity raised to see a popish service. Father Eustace, who has a forty-Jesuit power, and who was the lion's provider on that occasion, usually takes innumerable young people there, when supposed by their parents to be visiting relations, or attending an evening service in their own family-pew. The scene altogether is admirably got up. Such magnificent dresses! I felt it quite a grand piece of excitement also, at the evening receptions, to see the clergy kneel as they entered the drawing-room, with faces that expressed the very prostration of respect; and then a pompous full-dressed priest talking to poor little me, with a sort of superlative condescension that was quite overwhelming. I could not attend the popish service too often, and dear mamma thought I was always drinking tea with old Mrs. Courtney, as Father Eustace desired me to tell her so, saying he would take upon himself the whole sin, if there were any, of deceiving a Protestant parent for the good of his Church."

"Such is the teaching of a religion like that of Rome," said Lady Edith, "where the Bible is entirely suppressed, or only sold mysteriously in back-shops, to the very few who dare to wish for one. Lady Anne, you and I shall do the real work of life together now, continuing Christians on the rational, conscientious, and intellectual model of Scripture, in which I am sure you will find, as Beatrice and I have done, true happiness—long-enduring and satisfactory happiness. Such enjoyment as ours has been hitherto, seems to me almost a sample in hand of that state hereafter, to prepare for which life itself is bestowed.

"At thought of this,
The roused soul swells, boundless and sublime!"

Lord Eaglescain's illness was now really, or represented to be, so imminently dangerous that Lady Edith thought it necessary to postpone all inquiry respecting that great secret belonging to the birthright of Beatrice, which Bessie had in part discovered, but which

must of course, on the earliest opportunity, be legally investigated. In the meanwhile it was impossible to gain access to the sufferer, or to believe the report of a word that he said; therefore, though Father Eustace was profuse in his information, Lady Edith and Beatrice agreed that they must postpone all measures until the death or recovery of Lord Eaglescain made it right for them to act, though in the meanwhile Lady Edith, at her own expense, sent a well-instructed lawyer to make some necessary inquiries at Corunna.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“All farewells should be sudden when for ever.”—BYRON.

“I am more certain that it is a duty of nature to preserve a good parent’s life and happiness, than I am of any speculative point whatever.”—POPE.

A FORTNIGHT had elapsed, during which Lady Anne resided at Heatherbrae in so agitated and nervous a state, that she engrossed the whole time and thoughts of Lady Edith and Beatrice, who read to her, talked to her, and left nothing undone that the most ingenious affection could do to reconcile her to life and to herself. With a morbid sensibility, very common to the afflicted, she made a duty of being miserable, and hugged to her very heart every subject of self-reproach, every source of sorrow, as if it would be treason against the memory of her beloved mother ever to feel happy again; yet, as Lady Edith reminded her, the first and last wish of Lady Stratharden had ever been to shield her from every passing cloud of mere momentary distress, and that she should bask in a perpetual sunshine of enjoyment.

Amidst all their affectionate anxiety for Lady Anne, there was scarcely a minute for Lady Edith and Beatrice to think of any other friends; yet, at length, with a feeling of sudden surprise, they one day remarked to each other that the Clintons had never once called, or sent to inquire for Lady Anne, or to see how they were themselves.

At length, on the second Sunday after her return home, Lady Edith resolved, as in former times, to visit Mrs. Clinton in passing, and was delighted, as she approached the gate, to observe her friend slowly approaching, but with so feeble and languid a step, that Lady Edith became at once convinced she must have been ill. To her surprise, Mrs. Clinton, on perceiving her, made a full stop, hesitated, and then turned hurriedly back, as if anxious to avoid a meeting; but Lady Edith felt this to be so unlikely, that she at once advanced to overtake Mrs. Clinton, and having, without difficulty, arrested the heavy lagging movement of the fugitive, she

kindly laid her hand on her arm, and almost laughingly looked up at her old friend, intending, good-humouredly, to reproach her for this unusual flight.

When Mrs. Clinton slowly and unwillingly turned round, an exclamation of astonishment and consternation burst from the lips of Lady Edith, who stood aghast at the sight she saw; Mrs. Clinton's face was the image of death! She looked like one so entirely heart-broken, that all expression was extinct, and her eyes seemed like stone, incapable of tears. All her features spoke of—

“ The bursting heart, the tearless eye,
The cold and torpid frame ;
The smother'd groan, the broken sigh,
The grief she dare not name.”

The friends looked at each other for a moment in silence, and then Mrs. Clinton, grasping the hand of Lady Edith with an affectionate pressure, made a sign not to be detained or followed, and was about slowly to enter the house, looking as if buried in a bewildering dream, when Lady Edith, with earnest kindness, clasped hold of her dress, exclaiming, “ My dear Mrs. Clinton!—my dear friend!—tell me what has happened. You look like your own ghost! I have the right of one who loves you, Mrs. Clinton, to ask what is the matter? This must be something very dreadful! Why did you not send for me?”

Mrs. Clinton became more and more livid in her paleness, and still looked mournfully down as if unable to articulate. At length she answered in a low, broken, almost inaudible voice, “ There are things that cannot and must not be told. You will soon hear all—too soon! Did you ever know an extremity of suffering, dear Lady Edith, to which even the kindest sympathy brings no comfort? The heart knoweth its own bitterness——”

“ But I am not a stranger to intermeddle, I am a very old, and very attached friend,” replied Lady Edith, in a tone of sympathising perplexity. “ Dear Mrs. Clinton, our long intimacy entitles me to ask, and to know why you are so sadly, so alarmingly changed.”

“ Can you think of any circumstance that must deprive me for time and eternity of my husband, of my children, of my home—of all on earth that is dear to me, except yourself?” said Mrs. Clinton, in a low tremulous whisper. Her expression bore the stamp of such acute anguish, that it seemed almost as if she were delirious; and when she attempted to proceed, a choking sob prevented her. She struggled for a moment to recover herself, and finding every effort vain, she hurried to her own door. There she turned round, and her bloodless face had a look of such frenzied grief, that Lady Edith never afterwards forgot the impression. Making a hurried and imperative sign not to be followed, Mrs. Clinton darted out of sight, and closed the door.

A dreadful suspicion rushed at once into the mind of Lady Edith that Mr. Clinton must have apostatized to Romanism. She had always thought that Mrs. Clinton merely liked to talk on theological subjects in her own somewhat superficial way; to coquet a little with mediæval pictures, music, and architecture; and, in short, to play at monkery in the middle ages beside Father Eustace, who listened with such flattering attention to her most trifling remark, that it was very enticing, though no serious apprehension ever entered her head that she could be allured on to any sacrifice of principle. All that Mrs. Clinton had expected was, merely to skim lightly over the surface of controversial theology, herself seated on the coziest of arm-chairs on one side of a blazing winter fire, and her husband as comfortably enconced in his own opposite. Hence she intended that they should lament together over the prevalence of Romanism, going as near the edge of it themselves as they dared, rather sorry for others who became irretrievably victims, full of curiosity to hear the arguments by which their friends had become bewildered, exhausting the whole range of common-places in their censure of persons who go to extremes, and mildly hoping that some of the perverts might sooner or later, and somehow or other, be reclaimed. Father Eustace's influence with Mrs. Clinton had gone so far, but could go no farther. Mrs. Lorraine's plan with Mr. Clinton was yet deeper and more successful; for she gradually imparted to his mind all the interest of a dark conspiracy, mysteriously carried on against the freedom, public and domestic, of Great Britain itself. From the moment she gained his ear, he was entrusted with plots against the Established Church; plans for besieging families; news of expected conversions; schemes for entrapping heiresses; manœuvres for attracting landed proprietors, and commissions, like a tamed elephant, to gain over his own brethren. Mr. Clinton's life had now become more exciting than that of any sportsman, and instead of quietly pursuing his small duties at Clanmarina, his sphere was not only England, but the world; his object, to subvert its government, its freedom, and its laws. He seemed to have been asleep in the quiet execution of professional duties, in the closet, in the pulpit, and beside the dying; but now, he was wide awake to subjects of sleepless interest. He was now incorporated into a great body, and though personally no more than the very least of its little fingers, unable any longer to act or move of himself, he belonged to a Cardinal in red stockings, and to a Pope who carried the talisman of infallibility.

Lady Edith proceeded anxiously to chapel, where she had not been for several weeks, owing to her absence at Eaglescairn, and her arduous attendance subsequently on Lady Anne; but now she entered the sacred edifice with feelings of deep solicitude. To her surprise, the congregation, formerly so numerous and devout, was now reduced to one or two persons, who were gazing around with looks

of vacant surprise, or of irreverent curiosity. It was no wonder they did so, for Lady Edith was thunderstruck at the entire alteration in the quiet little chapel, and she scarcely identified her old place of resort, now entirely re-modelled. It had become a miserable imitation of Romanism. A high rood-screen divided the congregation from a new stone altar, which had replaced the ancient communion table, formerly covered, as the rubric directs, "with a white cloth, and placed in some convenient part of the church;" a tawdry picture of St. Bridget, in the very worst theatrical taste of the French school, which Lady Edith had always observed in the collection at Eaglescarn with dislike, was now hung over the altar. In front of this stood a large gilt cross, nearly three feet high, and that was flanked by two tall wax candles, which, in spite of a scorching sun blazing in at every window, were lighted. A superb altar-cloth of blue velvet was there, studded over with crosses and crowns. Each little gas-burner throughout the church was surmounted by a small iron cross; and the old Prayer-books, which Sir Evan had presented to the chapel, were all adorned by large gold crosses. New book-markers had also been placed in them of variously coloured ribbons, at the end of which little gilt images of the saints, about the size of a fourpenny piece, were suspended. Each of these ribbons had its own emblematical meaning, which, to young people fond of religious foppery, was mysteriously interesting. White ribbons were placed in the service for Baptism, red for the Communion office, and black for the Burial of the dead. The church was as full of flowers as Covent Garden market on the 1st of June; and a new reading-desk was placed about the middle of the small chapel.

Before Lady Edith had at all recovered her senses from the surprise of all this metamorphosis, she found herself listening to the prayers being intoned, a custom originating in very large overgrown cathedrals of old, where it was supposed to carry the sound further, but quite out of proportion to the miniature chapel at Clanmarina. Mr. Clinton, before the service began, had stood, looking much excited, in the aisle, wearing a long black dress, reaching almost to the ground, and a black cap, which gave him quite the air of a grand inquisitor. He studiously turned his back towards the scanty congregation, and read the first lesson in a strange mumbling tone, as if his only object were, not to be understood. His numerous genuflexions, turning always to the east, reminded Lady Edith of the Grand Mufti; and he seemed determined to show the congregation that they had no part in his service, and no right to hear it. Every time he entered within the rood-screen, Mr. Clinton made a sign of the cross and bowed; and once or twice he knelt as immoveably before the centre of the altar, as if turned into one of the wooden images he worshipped.

When Lady Edith saw such a vision of Protestant Romanism within the quiet homely chapel which had so long witnessed the

simple solemnities of a well-ordered Episcopal service, she asked herself if she were actually awake. When she thought of Mrs. Clinton's grief on this account, tears sprang into her own eyes, and she considered it no wonder that her friend had felt unwilling to accompany the congregation into such a scene. It was indeed evident that Mr. Clinton, already looking and acting so like a Popish priest, would soon be led on by Father Eustace to disown his marriage vow, and his Protestant faith; and though Lady Edith had intended to remain for the Holy Communion, she dared not now venture to stay for its sacred consolations, not knowing what extraordinary innovations contrary to her own faith and feelings might have been made in the solemn rite.

Lady Edith was leaving the house of a poor woman she had visited on her way home at the very moment when Mr. Clinton was passing on his road homewards, so that it became almost an inevitable piece of mutual politeness that they should walk along the road together, which accordingly they did, though both, for the first time, equally unwilling to associate.

They shook hands at first in silence, while Mr. Clinton tried to assume as matter-of-fact an aspect as he could command; but, nevertheless, he looked undeniably abashed. Lady Edith was, however, the most agitated of the two; but after a pause to recover herself, she said, in a low accent, and with a penetrating look that nothing could evade, "Mr. Clinton, I am desirous neither to mistake, nor to be mistaken; tell me, then, is it to a clergyman still in the Church of England that I speak, or to a deserter and apostate?"

"Judge me, Lady Edith, with your wonted candour," answered Mr. Clinton, evasively, and twirling his spectacles with nervous energy; "I have too long been a mere lukewarm Christian, or at best with the chill taken off. I am now greatly changed; and there may be much, perhaps, to startle and alarm your rather puritanical notions. My perplexities of mind have of late become a torture beyond bearing; and within the last few weeks, suddenly, without any remarkable addition to my store of facts or principles, it seems to me as if I could not any longer hold myself back from—

from—"

"I understand you, Mr. Clinton. I am not unprepared for this fearful acknowledgment, mournful as it is. From the time of Mrs. Lorraine's arrival at Clanmarina, Protestantism has become a mere dead deposit in your mind, not existing in your heart. You have for some weeks appeared to me a would-be Papist, and now you are one. You preached to-day the infallibility of human dictation in spiritual things, and the Divine authority of the visible Church; therefore, whether you apostatize sooner or later, you are sliding down an inclined plane, with nothing to stop your descent short of that superstition which prostrates your reason, your judgment, your principles, and every earthly tie of affection or duty."

"Lady Edith," replied Mr. Clinton, with an appearance of more

solemn regret than he had before testified, "my regard for friends such as yourself, to whom I owe a lifetime of gratitude and esteem, has been one of the chief impediments to my entire conversion, or, at least, to my declaring it. Without repining, though with lasting sorrow, I could prepare to relinquish all hitherto precious to my heart,—my Protestant parish, my domestic habits, my former opinions, my ancient prejudices,—all but my old friendships, unless you are bigot enough to desire it. Let us, then, be better friends than ever for the future, and perhaps at last you may think as I do, and be as happy as I am."

"I know well the trick of your new associates, Mr. Clinton," said Lady Edith, with a melancholy smile, "but do not for a moment suppose I could think so lightly of an apostasy on your part as to continue our acquaintance at all. From no point of view can I see it otherwise than as a death-blow to yourself, which ends our intercourse. It has become your duty to proselyte, it is mine to avoid the danger; by our ever being seen together, I should give the sanction of my example to others for exposing themselves to a siege in which they can gain nothing, and may lose all."

"You intend to become quite an alarmist among my old friends and parishioners," observed Mr. Clinton, with a deprecating smile, and rapidly fluctuating colour; "I trust that they may not all desert one who wishes them well, and will do his best to serve them."

"Yes, by urging them to break loose from the limits of the Bible into the unlimited wilds of tradition! I trust, and believe, Mr. Clinton, that the congregation, to a single individual, will all forsake you. When the trumpet gives an uncertain sound it cannot lead us on to the battle. Every head of a family ought to leave you at once, before the taint has reached one member of their households. I am a woman, and must, you know, speak my mind."

"You always did," observed Mr. Clinton, with a sad smile, "and you have a right to your own opinions, as I have to mine."

"Yes; while I remain a Protestant, I may think, speak, and act for myself, but you will soon be bound to obey the slightest nod from Rome, in obedience to that false superstition which is a mere forgery on the bank of truth," answered Lady Edith, in a tone of deep regret. "My own candid idea is, that you have been worked up to an actual delirium at Eaglescairn, that bleeding and blistering would do you more good now than controversy, and that, indeed, all those who are reeling over into idolatry, might be very advantageously ordered by their doctors a few months of calm domestic retirement in their own family circles, aloof from Papal controversy, and with an anodyne prescription for their mental disease of the most sensible Protestant works. At the end of a year the patient would look back on such a state as yours with much the same feeling that he would remember the delirium of a typhus fever. Now, Mr. Clinton, I wish you a long and very sorrowful farewell! The

sight of you, probably soon to be a pervert, serves as the strongest warning I could receive, not to trust myself in Popish society. It should be a remarkable admonition for all Protestants to 'take heed lest they fall,' that of those names inscribed at Oxford as having raised the monument recently built there to Cranmer and Ridley, more than a third have already been seduced into apostasy, and would now, perhaps, willingly burn those martyrs over again if they could; among these new perverts many had long been dozing on towards indifferentism, and others were inflated with vanity or pride, but all are now alike prostrated in the dust before a foreign priest and a degrading superstition."

Mr. Clinton lingered for some moments, as if unwilling to bid his old friend a last adieu, and when Lady Edith turned away, the tears rolled down her aged cheeks with sorrowful emotion; she held out her hand in silence to Mr. Clinton, who grasped it with all his old feeling revived for the moment of respectful attachment. The artificial expression of downcast sanctity in his well-drilled countenance gave way to a look of natural feeling, and he appeared again so like the Mr. Clinton of former and better days, that Lady Edith looked round as she retired, saying, "If you ever return to the old paths, Mr. Clinton, let me be the first to welcome you back."

"No," muttered Mr. Clinton to himself, in a tone of high excitement, "never:—

"All worldly goods and wealth, which once I loved,
I now do count but dross;
My pride is to despise myself; my joy
All insults, sneers, and slanders of mankind;
No creature now I love."

The sun shone brightly one morning on Mr. Clinton's little parsonage,—the large old apple-tree was shedding its blossoms in a white shower on the grassy lawn, and roses clustered round the five latticed windows, as well as over the low rustic porch,—all nature looked gay and *riante*, but nevertheless, Lady Edith thought or fancied that there was a silence so unusual there, and an uninhabited melancholy air about the house itself, which made her sad. She wished to see Mrs. Clinton on business of some consequence to a poor family in Clanmarina, and having repeatedly knocked at the door without any one appearing, she wondered more and more at the noiseless stillness of all within and without. Lady Edith looked around, sadly remembering what a scene of joyous usefulness that little cottage and garden had so long been, and what unlooked for changes were now impending. The Bishop of Inverness had announced a visitation to Clanmarina, in consequence of the representations made to him of the Popish doctrines which Mr. Clinton taught as Episcopalian, and there was no reason to suppose it possible that such a man as the Bishop of Inverness could allow

him to continue thus preaching Romanism in a Protestant pulpit. Mr. Clinton had endeavoured to set up for being a martyr under persecution, but it was a signal failure, as all the congregation were now aware that he literally did at Rome as Rome does, and attended the Popish mass during his whole residence in Eaglescain, which his people did not consider to be a perfectly Protestant proceeding or a perfectly fair one. If he received the emoluments of one Church and supported another, it was not serving two masters, but betraying one.

Lady Edith observed a recent trace of carriage-wheels on the gravel before Mr. Clinton's house, and the door of entrance stood ajar, but the silence remained unbroken, except by the repeated knocks of the visitor again and again and again for admission. Assuming at length the privilege of an old friend, as the business could not be postponed, she entered unannounced, and proceeded straight to the only sitting-room. There, to her utter surprise, stood the shutters only half open, the tea-things of the night before on the table, two candlesticks with extinguishers on, and the ashes unswept from the grate. All had a look of recent hurry and confusion, of desolation and misery. Papers and ends of rope were scattered in confusion on the floor, the refuse evidently of a hasty packing up; numerous letters lay torn to atoms in the grate, and almost every book had been taken from the shelves, which were empty.

Lady Edith looked around in dismay, and felt as if she had of late been born into a perfectly new world, so unlike were its unexpected changes and its painful vicissitudes to anything that in her peaceful course of action she had hitherto known. For several minutes the solitary visitor stood almost unconsciously gazing at this unexpected and most unaccountable confusion. Hitherto, if the Clintons were going merely to dine a few miles off with a neighbouring farmer, they mentioned this little piece of parish gossip a week before; and they scarcely ever left home for half a day, without calling to tell Lady Edith and Beatrice of this extraordinary dissipation,—but now!—where could they be gone?

Lady Edith wandered thoughtfully on towards Mrs. Clinton's own bed-room, where, having always formerly had the privilege of entering without even the previous ceremony of knocking, she now opened the door and walked in. The room appeared nearly dark, and the bed, which was turned down, had evidently not been slept in that night. With a feeling of greatly increased anxiety, Lady Edith turned away, intending if possible to find Mrs. Clinton's own maid-of-all-work, below stairs, when her progress was suddenly stopped by the sound of a low deep sob. It was repeated again and again, with a suffocating excess of grief apparently, which struck a chill into Lady Edith's very heart, as she hurried forward at once into the dressing-room.

A large arm-chair stood between Lady Edith and the door, but on

advancing to the other side she discovered Mrs. Clinton prostrate on her knees, her hands riveted together and her face buried in the cushions. It was evident from Mrs. Clinton's evening dress that she had not been in bed all night, but she was now obviously engaged in such fervent prayer, that Lady Edith dared not by word or action interrupt so sacred a duty, therefore she stood for several minutes in solemn apprehension of what revelation was to follow.

Lady Edith intending to wait in the next room for an interview, was gliding almost noiselessly away, when Mrs. Clinton suddenly looked up. In a moment she rose, held out her hand to Lady Edith, and feebly attempted to give her a kind smile of welcome, but so ghastly was its expression that her alarmed visitor, unable to look at a face so convulsed with anguish, closed her eyes. The next moment Mrs. Clinton had thrown herself into the arms of Lady Edith, and burst into an agony of tears.

"My dear friend! my dearest Mrs. Clinton! tell me all," said Lady Edith, in soothing accents. "Where is your husband gone?"

"My husband! Dare I call him so any longer?" sobbed Mrs. Clinton, while a spasm of mental anguish contracted her almost livid features; and she whispered with evident difficulty the rest. "Last night, at the Romish chapel, he made his recantation. I do not believe Edward intended it an hour before! All is over! He has wrenched himself from every human tie; he has entered the monastery of Inverness. They wished me to become a nun of St. Ignatia, and that would divorce him, then he could be a priest. Let me die at once to serve Edward, but I cannot be an apostate."

"No," replied Lady Edith, soothingly, "you must live for your boys."

"They, too, are gone," sobbed Mrs. Clinton, resting her burning forehead on the shoulder of Lady Edith, and speaking in a voice faint with agony. "Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine took my boys. He had got presentations for them both to the gratis college at Inverness. The priests had settled it all a month since; but I, the wretched wife and still more wretched mother, never knew it—never, never!"

Mrs. Clinton, usually so quiet and passive, tossed her arms wildly up, and clasped her hands above her head, with a look of such frantic grief that her senses seemed forsaking her, while she added, in hurried accents, and in so unearthly a voice that Lady Edith felt paralysed, "We are to meet no more! My husband believes it would be a sin ever to see his faithful wife again."

"He thinks," replied Lady Edith sadly, "by making this world a purgatory, to escape one in the world to come. What a fatal, cruel delusion!"

"I always knew," added Mrs. Clinton, solemnly, "that death at last must part us, and I felt, in some degree, prepared for that; one or other, I knew, must survive in solitary sorrow to mourn for the other:—"

“ ‘There is no union here on earth,
That finds not here an end.’ ”

But Father Eustace has brought on me this long agony without death, for which I was totally—totally unprepared. God help us all! May my senses not forsake me!”

Lady Edith felt that words were wasted in offering consolation to such sorrow as this; but affectionately leading Mrs. Clinton to the sofa, she gently placed her on it, and, kneeling by her side, she in faltering accents of deep emotion offered up a short and fervent prayer for her heart-stricken friend. It was full of sympathy, full of affection, and at the same time full of an abounding faith in the merciful superintendence of God, which nothing on earth could shake.

From henceforth Mrs. Clinton's home was no longer her own, and she had few, very few possessions. Her active life had been one of daily self-denial; and during the many years of her married happiness, she had never spent a frivolous shilling. Now nothing was left her but a few books by the best Protestant authors, and her own inestimable Bible.

“I wonder what degree of grief kills people, if mine does not!” said Mrs. Clinton, some hours after, in a faint and tremulous voice, to Lady Edith, who held her cold, clammy, death-like hand; “I shall soon be in my grave, or yet more probable, in a lunatic asylum.”

“No, dear Mrs. Clinton; you will to-night be in my house, and remain there always among those who, with their whole hearts, love, honour, and respect you. At my home, this evening, we must all unite in prayer for your unhappy husband. This is a delirium that comes over people, quite beyond the reach of reasoning, and perfectly untouched by argument or common sense; it is like the effect of magic; but let us hope all things, and believe all things possible.”

“My boys, too! my darling boys! Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine did not even allow me to take leave of them; they were gone before I found out the danger.” Mrs. Clinton rocked herself to and fro, with her hands clenched over her forehead, adding, “He who never had wife or child, cannot feel for me. I might as well expect to find fire burning in a marble statue as pity in Father Eustace. My dear, darling boys!”

“They go, dear Mrs. Clinton, fortified by your prayers these many long years, and by your best instructions.”

“Yes; but, dear Lady Edith, for some time past their own father has been reading to our boys preparatory books that I could not approve: little *novellettes*, by English clergymen, full of allegorical phantoms, fairies, and magic, to prepare their young minds for supernatural visions and fictitious miracles. Children may easily be educated for superstitious horrors, because that taste is, like every other popish error, founded on fallen human nature.”

"I know the sort of books. Protestant parents call them 'so pretty,' and do not see the poison they contain. They have allegories full of imaginative religion, describing children, for instance, who carry palm branches in their hands up the hill of life, which withered or drooped if they sinned; or whose garments glistened with supernatural light while they crossed a dark stream, but became spotted with black when they were wicked. Such fables train their minds in the way they are now intended to go. I remember nurse Barton, whom you dismissed years ago, because, to save herself trouble in training the children to rational obedience, she told them, and they implicitly believed, that a black man would carry them away if they were naughty. How undoubtingly they credited that pious fraud! and nurse Barton's lie was quite a rehearsal of the popish system—a bad action for a good end."

"Their father has fallen at once into the snare of Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine; therefore what hope can I have that my boys shall be preserved from it?" said Mrs. Clinton, with hopeless despondency; "their young minds will be ruined by my own husband, whom I have always, of course, taught them to reverence and believe. When he misdirects them, what hope can there be!"

Mrs. Clinton started up and paced hurriedly about the room for some time, then sinking exhausted on the sofa, she grasped Lady Edith's hand, saying, "You are right, my best friend, as well as kind. If I am to survive this blow,—if my faculties are still to exist, it must be by leaving every fond association of home, every object to remind me of the loved and lost. I am now a childless widow. Let me go, then, with the dearest friend that remains to one so heart-broken. My obedience to God must now be shown, by living—oh, how disconsolately! on—if such be His will, and by living on to His glory, if that be possible."

The hospitable cottage of Heatherbrae was like Prince Ahmed's fairy tent, which could be folded into a nutshell or expanded to hold an army,—or like a round dinner-table, which, whatever numbers may assemble, could always hold one more guest.

Lady Edith and Beatrice made every arrangement for the removal of Mrs. Clinton, who seemed stunned, without even the power of thought, and her usual energy was totally extinct, so that she appeared unable to fix her afflicted mind upon anything. They anticipated every wish that she could have formed, and considered every feeling, until at length all was ready; and the poor sufferer, scarcely sensible of what passed, found herself in a small, but most comfortable bed-room at Heatherbrae. There the quiet and fresh air, the cheerful sunshine, the birds and flowers, and above all, the soothing sympathy of Lady Edith, might have revived any spirit but that of so cruelly-bereaved a wife and mother. Mrs. Clinton's very heart seemed burned to the socket, while day after day she sat beside the open casement, endeavouring to read or to work; but the bright sunny landscape appeared as if it scorned such misery as

hers; while now and then, with parched lips, feverish cheeks, and distended eyes, she gazed for a moment towards her old home, sighed heavily over the memories of all her past life, and prayer fully tried to submit implicitly, in heart and soul, to the divinely appointed trials of her now gloomy existence.

“Nature hath assign’d
Two sovereign remedies for human grief:
Religion, surest, firmest, first, and best,
Strength to the weak, and to the wounded balm;
And strenuous action next.”—*Southey*.

Some days after her arrival at Heatherbrae, Mrs. Clinton, looking like a living spectre, though the first impetuosity of her anguish was subsided, had been seated some time beside Lady Edith, listening to her conversation, which was like balm poured into an aching wound, when the door was suddenly thrown wide open, there was an outcry of outrageous joy in the passage, and before she had time for so much as an exclamation of surprise, the two boys had rushed into their mother’s arms.

• “Mamma!” exclaimed the eldest, in accents trembling with delight, “we have found our own way back! Old John was driving the mail-cart from Inverness, when we saw him from the windows of that horrid place. I asked him to take us with him, so he waited—and here we are. Why did Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine carry us away? Ned and I hated that school. We were to be punished for not kneeling to one of those dolls dressed in gold; but I knew the second commandment better than to agree. Now, mamma, pray keep us at home. We were sure you would wish us to leave such naughty people—so foolish, too, and very cruel to Ned and me.”

Mrs. Clinton, her lips the hue of ashes, her cheek white as death, folded the two boys in her arms, and burst into an hysterical agony of tears. It appeared as if her very soul would part from her body in this extremity of trial; for the rolling waves of her misery seemed to come faster and heavier on her the longer she clasped to her heart these children, who would soon, she knew, be torn from her again by their perverted father.

“Mamma, are you not glad to see us?” exclaimed Alfred, the eldest, with a look of injured feeling. “Did I do wrong in coming? We can both go back if you bid us. I thought you would be so happy to see me again, mamma!”

The boy’s lip quivered with wounded sensibility, and he burst into tears. Mrs. Clinton still embracing him, attempted, in a low suffocating tone, to answer, but her voice was extinct, and her whole countenance assumed the hue and the fixedness of marble. The very life-blood was frozen within her; for every word spoken by the child planted a dagger in her heart; while he, clinging fondly to her side, looked wonderingly up at her face, in which was an unmis-

takeable expression of livid grief, and said, "I will do anything that you bid me, mamma! Are we really, *really* to go back and do all that those curious people desire? Are we to kiss those nasty old bones, and to kneel before that doll with the gold muslin frock? I like my own old religion best, mamma, without any dolls or beads. I am not accustomed to lick the floor with my tongue; but if you say that it is right, we must try. You know, mamma, you always told us yourself—and so did papa—"

"God help me!" said Mrs. Clinton, in a tone of piercing anguish. "Oh, that the earth would cover me! My boys—my darling boys! Look at your heart-broken mother, and remember this hour for ever and ever. All the grief you see is because you must soon be taken from me again; because you are to be taught this new religion, which gives you magical tales instead of the Bible, and which teaches you to obey the will of Father Eustace instead of God's will."

"Nothing can ever make me do that," said the boy, his young face assuming a look of seriousness. "We shall stay with our own mamma, and learn from you to be good, as we used to do. You always said that God had given us to you, on purpose that you might teach us right, and now we shall try to obey only you and papa. Nothing shall take us away, unless you say we are to go."

Mrs. Clinton sunk back on the sofa, her eyes distended, and her knees trembling with agony, while with a bewildered look she glanced around, as if seeking for assistance, but unable to find any.

Lady Edith gazed with deep emotion at the look of honest sturdy resolution lighting up the young boy's handsome countenance, and her usually brave heart sunk with sorrowful apprehension, knowing how little even the strongest natures are fitted to cope with priestcraft, and especially with Jesuit-craft.

In consequence of much that Lady Edith had heard from her heart-broken guest, a strong conviction gradually settled on her mind how impossible it would be to discover any remains of good sense or right feeling in Mr. Clinton, who was now apparently in the highest pitch of fanaticism. Like all new converts, he was perfectly simmering with frantic zeal, and certainly no red-hot papist who ever fired a faggot at Smithfield could be compared to him.

From all that Lady Edith heard of Mr. Clinton now, it seemed as if her once-esteemed friend had fallen under the spell of some gloomy sorcerer, and as if he had no more heart or intellect left than could be contained in a hazel-nut, leaving plenty of room to spare. The skilful training of Mrs. Lorraine had evidently brought him to such a state of mind as that of St. Francis de Sales and Madame-de Chantal, by the same sort of sentimental Platonic attachment; and the influence gained over Bessie for a time by Father Eustace had been on a somewhat similar plan. It was

Ex

agony even to Lady Edith, a comparative stranger, when she saw the brave little spirit of that noble boy, Alfred Clinton, flashing in his eyes while stoutly declaring his purpose to struggle against a separation from his own mother, and when she knew that the bold little fellow was sure to be conquered. Nature can only bear a certain amount of suffering, and survive. There was something perfectly overawing in the extremity of Mrs. Clinton's anguish, when, after vainly attempting to speak, her voice became suffocated with grief, and clasping her son, with a look of death-like anguish, in her arms, she fainted.

The unconscious mother was carried to bed, in a state of merciful suspension from suffering, and days passed over her head in frightful delirium, so that fears were entertained by the doctors lest the shock to her intellects might be incurable. When Mrs. Clinton recovered her recollection, the boys had been already reclaimed by their father, to be kept under Jesuit guidance for ever.

Who can measure the power of human nature to suffer and live on! It seemed as if ten years of wasting anguish had gone over the head of Mrs. Clinton when she at length awoke from her trance-like state to the vague and dizzying consciousness of her own utter misery. She felt a confused and bewildering sensation of desolate wretchedness, a dull, heavy, lifeless sorrow, which finally formed itself into the one bitter consciousness that home, husband, and children were hers no more. While grief seemed gnawing at her heart-strings, Mrs. Clinton appeared to have wept her brain dry, for not a tear would flow, but she felt a shuddering consciousness of the long-enduring misery to come hereafter, as she trod the weary road of life without sunshine or hope.

"My dear Mrs. Clinton," said the kind-hearted Beatrice, "it is impossible not to feel misfortunes such as yours; but in this world of changes, try still to hope—try to look for better days."

"They must come more rapidly than time ever travels, or my broken spirit will be at rest," replied Mrs. Clinton, whose heart nearly burst as she uttered the words. "There is a chain of inexpressible misery around me. Mine is a sorrow that knows not the name of consolation. A smouldering fire! I have not long to live, and nothing to live for. Oh, teach me, if you can, to forget; but you cannot teach me not to mourn and die."

"How truly did the saddest of all poets say that—

"'The heart may break, and yet brokenly live on,'"

replied Lady Edith. "Though that sun can no longer charm away for you the gloom of nature, a better light, dear Mrs. Clinton, will reach your soul. Mere nature would show you the world now as a dreary desert, with not a green spot for hope to rest on. Life seems to you a very long and dreary, and very crooked road; but trust in that God with whom your prayers, during a lifetime, are now registered for ever."

Mrs. Clinton neither spoke nor opened her eyes, but wished she could have remained for ever in a state of unconsciousness. Every overstrained nerve in her body seemed on the crack, but Lady Edith held her lifeless hand, still cold as death. At length a tremor shook her frame, a low convulsive sigh burst from her heart, and she attempted, in a faint, gasping voice, to ask for her boys.

There arises in many afflicted minds, at last, a strange, unnatural luxury in brooding over sorrow, and in hoarding up every source of anguish. Mrs. Clinton, from that hour, repeated to herself with growing despondency; that she was alone in the world now, forsaken for ever; that every fibre of hope was torn up by the root and withered; that the sting of death itself could be nothing compared to the sting of life such as hers. Meanwhile, Lady Edith and Beatrice, with ceaseless sympathy, tried to render her grief less abject, and to rouse in her the more hopeful spirit of Christian confidence in the merciful benevolence of God, till, at length her tears became so softened that they only melted, but did not wither up her suffering heart, for she could look to the future as the sailor looks through his telescope for the distant prospect beyond.

"I grant that the stroke which has laid thy hopes low,
Is perhaps the severest that nature can know;
If hope but deferr'd may cause sickness of heart,
How dreadful to see it for ever depart!"—*Barton*

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"We live to pleasure when we live to God."

DODDRIDGE

ALL men sail onwards in life under sealed orders, not knowing what a day, or even an hour, is to bring forth; but the Christian is ready to trim his sails and point his helm so as to follow the line of duty as it is step by step revealed, ever willing to welcome events as they come, because he recognises the hand that sends them. The morning dawned, on the 25th of July, 1852, Sir Allan's birthday, when he came of age, and was expected to sign the fatal deed, already prepared on parchment, and with all the due formalities, which Lady Anne told Lady Edith she had seen on the table of Father Eustace, by which he alienated from himself and from his heirs for ever, that noble property of Clanmarina, and of Cairn-gorum Castle, which had belonged for centuries to the clan McAlpine, but which, having now fallen to the last heir of entail, was already almost within grasp of the Jesuits.

They were no ordinary tears which fell from the aged eyes of Lady Edith Tremorne, as she remembered the former birth-days of

Allan, when prayers of thankfulness from lips now silent for ever were mingled with every rational and innocent enjoyment of social intercourse. They were no ordinary tears with which Lady Edith looked out that day from her window at the smiling village, once embellished by the well-directed enthusiasm of Sir Evan, and now glowing under the bright tints of a rising sun, unconscious of its impending doom. They were bitter tears, indeed, with which Lady Edith contrasted the industrious prosperity of Protestant Clanmarrina with that popish beggarly portion of the hamlet, robbed of all its income by the domination of a grasping and most expensive superstition.

Very different days from hitherto must now befall the honest-hearted, sound-headed villagers,—those Bible Christians, to whose welfare Lady Edith was so entirely devoted; and from henceforth her teaching of the children, as well as her care of the sick, would be sternly discouraged. Even her continuing to reside at Heatherbrae must be an unwelcome intrusion on the new proprietors; but she steadily resolved, while life remained, to brave every difficulty among the old clansmen of McAlpine. “No religion utterly strips people like Jesuitism,” thought Lady Edith mournfully; “but it is the triumph of its superstition that a convert like Allan shall be born into Jesuitism naked as when he was born into the world, for the very clothes he is to wear are sent to him by the priests. Sir Evan’s picture, his mother’s hair, my own letters, all must be forfeited; and if he even reserves an old nail or a bit of twine to be his own, he breaks his vow of poverty. Allan being too truthful and honest for their purposes, will not be actively employed, but will be consigned to the depths of La Trappe for life, the willing victim of a delirious infatuation. God help that poor boy! He is beyond the reach of all who really love him!” exclaimed Lady Edith, leaning heavily on the arm of Beatrice, as they walked out together. “Will he pay me his promised visit to-day? He pledged himself solemnly to give me one last interview. It would be a melancholy comfort yet.”

“He dare not trust himself, and he will not be trusted by priests,” replied Lady Anne, sadly. “Father Ambrose, his uncle, was obliged yesterday to go abroad, but the spell of Father Eustace’s eye is still upon him. They will not allow him to see his old haunts, and I believe Sir Allan could more easily face a regiment of artillery now, than a group of old friends like us. No, he will not, and dare not come.”

“Certainly not,” added Beatrice, with sorrowful despondency; and as nothing is more provoking sometimes than to be agreed with in opinion, so Lady Anne felt it now. “Allan’s tether will not be extended to this house, and the iron bars must very soon stand between him and us for ever. The portcullis falls to-day.”

“Could we not get up a *de lunatico inquirendo*?” asked Lady Anne, with a mournful attempt at mirth. “I am sure two

months ago it would have been merciful to shut me up under Dr. McIndre, rather than under Father Eustace! There is a death-cloud now over my remembrance of those days, never to be removed. I felt as if pounded in a mortar with the weight of that fearful blow which awoke me; and who would not wish Sir Allan emancipated, even if the remedy were as severe! Certainly, as a monk is considered dead to the world when he enters a monastery, he should at once be succeeded by his nearest sane relative. The most distant cousin is a nearer heir than the Pope."

Lady Edith and her three companions had gone out before breakfast to gather some fresh dewy buds from a moss-rose bush which almost overhung the high road, and were in earnest conversation on the hideous prospect of Sir Allan's ruin, when Beatrice suddenly observed at some distance a horse and its rider, not at all agreed as to the way they were to take. The spirited animal reared and plunged frightfully, while the skilful horseman, enveloped in a cloud of dust, so that she could scarcely see him, kept his seat with admirable dexterity. The conflict was long and desperate, but at length the rein suddenly broke, the horse sprang forward like a cat, the rider lost his seat, and Beatrice, with a scream of dismay, pointed to him prostrate on the road. A moment more and the horse was at full speed towards the place where the ladies had rushed out on the highway, and the unfortunate rider's foot being entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged helplessly along the ground.

"This road is narrow—let us make a chain across it," exclaimed Lady Edith, steadily planting herself in the centre, while the other ladies hand-in-hand instantly formed a line which could not be passed. As the excited animal approached this barrier, he slackened his speed, and at length paused, as if doubtful whether to turn or advance.

Lady Edith then speaking gently and approaching slowly, succeeded in seizing an end of the broken rein, and Beatrice in a moment cut the stirrup-strap, so as completely to disengage the prostrate rider's foot. It was the work of an instant, and the horse then left to himself galloped, fleet as the wind, out of sight towards Eaglescairn Castle.

The horseman lay apparently dead, his coat torn, his face disfigured, and his whole person so bedabbled and besmeared with blood and dust, that no one could recognise him; till at length Lady Anne exclaimed with a shriek of sudden horror, "It is Sir Allan!" Another glance, and Lady Edith saw that it was so. Meanwhile the servants, by her orders, had brought out a mattress on which the insensible sufferer was laid. They bore him carefully into the cottage, and a heavy moan, when McRonald laid him on the bed, was the only sign he gave of life and suffering.

Lady Edith, with solemn anxiety too great for utterance, had him placed in her own room, and sent instantly for the nearest advice,

not only from Clanmarina, but also from Inverness. Scarcely a spark of life lingered in that shattered body, and the doctors, after a long consultation, said the head had been so much injured that a brain fever was greatly to be apprehended; at all events Dr. Campbell said that for weeks, or perhaps months, if consciousness were restored, he must be kept perfectly and intensely quiet, or the consequences of the least emotion would be almost immediately fatal.

Lady Edith in the depths of her sorrow for Allan's very imminent danger, felt one gleam of actual joy. Her own beloved Allan must remain under her roof, and if he lived, no earthly power could for months to come take the beloved sufferer from her affectionate care. She gazed at his livid face, begrimed with blood and rigid as death, and listened with a look of searching and fearful anxiety to Dr. Campbell, who gave her very hopeless encouragement by assuring her, that he had once, but only once, seen a case as bad, in which the patient recovered. Still Lady Edith clung to hope, and felt almost ashamed of the irresistible pleasure it was to her, in spite of all his sufferings and danger, when she saw Allan delivered, for a time at least, from those who would have consigned him for life to an imprisonment worse than death. While prayers for the best of blessings on him streamed from her lips, Lady Edith felt the full comfort of that deep conviction, engrained into her mind, that whatever happens to any individual is by the special direction of that wise Providence who knows and does what is best. An obstinate hope fastened itself into her mind, that perhaps the granting of her own fervent prayers might be consistent with the Divine will towards Allan, and that he might at last become renovated in mind as well as in body, into the Allan of happier days.

"Do you suppose the paper has been signed that makes Allan a beggar, and Clanmarina a ruined village?" asked Lady Edith, with deep anxiety, of Lady Anne. "The Jesuits are not men to delay an hour grasping what they can."

"Most probably the deed was signed when I saw it, with a false date, to make it legal now," replied Lady Anne, thoughtfully; "Father Eustace intended to have done so with my documents."

"Even if Allan be utterly stripped, his soul, dearer to me than all beside, may yet be snatched from slavery in this life, and from destruction in the life to come;" said Lady Edith, solemnly, while covering her face with her hands in a state of irresistible pleasure that such a hope yet remained to her; and that pleasure was redoubled when Dr. Campbell entered the room to announce that, by means of bleeding the patient within an inch of his life, he had been rendered conscious, though his existence depended on perfect quietness of mind and body.

When all that medical aid could do had been done, and Allan in the darkened room was laid quiet, breathing and apparently sensible, though unable to speak, Lady Edith requested Dr. Campbell

himself to call at Eaglescairn Castle, on his way back towards Inverness, there to give information of the accident, and to mention his own injunctions as to the perfect repose, on preserving which Sir Allan's life evidently depended. Not knowing how to anticipate that Father Eustace would act, Lady Edith prepared herself for all contingencies, and felt scarcely surprised, though very much annoyed, when within the very shortest period possible, a chariot and four arrived at her little garden-gate, from which alighted Lady Eaglescairn escorted by Father Eustace.

There was an aspect of extreme agitation and perplexity in both their countenances, perfectly natural in so sudden a calamity; but nevertheless Lady Edith could not but hope that some part of their evident chagrin might spring from apprehension lest the deed of conveyance had not yet become valid which was to make Sir Allan a beggar,—which was to enrich his advisers,—which was to make the Chief of McAlpine partner in a concern that caused every shareholder to be a bankrupt slave for life,—which was to make Father Eustace despotic lord of all he surveyed.

The noise of the carriage, of the footsteps, of the voices outside the window, reached Lady Edith when silently seated beside her scarcely breathing charge. Rising, therefore, cautiously, she stole out of the room, and almost flew down stairs, to prevent the visitors from gaining access within her porch, as she knew that once in the house, it would be impossible to keep out or to turn out the priest, without such a scene as would probably cost Allan his life. Father Eustace knew, as she did, that once in that room he would become master there. Lady Edith hurried out by the glass door of her own sitting-room, and gliding hastily round to the front entrance, met the party and stopped them as Father Eustace was about to ring a peremptory peal at the bell.

"My patient shows very faint signs of life," said Lady Edith, endeavouring to suppress all outward evidence of agitation, and addressing her intended visitors with very distant politeness; "if a mere pin dropped in my small house it might startle him, and the slightest disturbance would extinguish all our hopes. You will therefore agree with me, I trust, Lady Eaglescairn, that only one person should attend upon Sir Allan."

"Certainly, and that one shall be myself," replied Father Eustace, with an eye as keen as that of any wild animal watching for its prey, and advancing eagerly towards the door. "It is a duty which I came here resolved to do, towards a valued member of my flock."

"I have no proof to what flock Sir Allan belongs. No clergyman of any creed shall have access to my guest until he asks to see one and names him," replied Lady Edith, firmly. "I have Dr. Campbell's authority for saying that the smallest excitement would cost Sir Allan his very life,—that faint spark of life which remains. My patient has no relatives within reach, and as the kind providence of God has thrown him again on my care, no inducement

can make me admit any one into his room but myself and the sick-nurse, till Dr. Campbell gives an explicit order that I shall."

Lady Edith looked up steadily to meet the infuriated eye of Father Eustace, and certainly the stoic had for that moment forgotten his philosophy, when he added threateningly, between his set teeth:—

"I must see McAlpine. Lady Edith, I never either loved or hated in vain, and if you hinder my seeing Sir Allan you will repent it. I know that in general you are as hospitable as an Arab. Give me, then, under your roof a crust of bread and a nook in which to rest."

"Nothing short of death could be more unwelcome to me in that room than yourself, sir; and, as Allan needs nothing but quiet, that is a luxury easily obtained, of which in my cottage he shall be secure. Every human being must unite in wishing to avert the danger of a brain-fever from the sufferer, by leaving him undisturbed."

"Wherever duty calls, no impediment can prevent my going," replied Father Eustace sternly. "If you stop me, it is at your peril. Sir Allan needs the offices of my Church, and he shall have them."

"Not while this house is mine and Dr. Campbell forbids your entrance. For many days Sir Allan can require nothing, as he is forbidden to speak or even to think. It is now distinctly the will of Providence that my patient shall thus be aloof from all intercourse with any of us. All that you or I can do is, to pray for him."

With these words Lady Edith gravely but politely took leave, and was retreating through the glass door, when she observed Father Eustace deliberately advance to the front entrance and give an authoritative knock. She instantly followed him, and, as McRonald's fine soldier-like figure appeared at the door, she turned round saying with a half smile, "You see, sir, my house is not only my castle, but better garrisoned than you expected. Any attempt to intrude here will certainly be defeated."

Independently of all the unspeakable sorrow that McRonald had suffered on account of his grand-daughter Bessie, he always was a perfect Covenanter of the old school in his horror of a Romish priest. From boyhood he had classed Popish superstition with Pagan idolatry and Mahometan delusion, as being all perfectly on a par; no sooner therefore had he received Lady Edith's sanction for keeping out "the Cardinal of Clanmarina," as Father Eustace was now frequently called, than with a look of quiet determination, such as he wore when heading the forlorn hope at Bergen-op-zoom, he planted himself in the doorway, and ten stout men could not have forced the passage. McRonald abhorred Father Eustace with his whole heart and soul, but the old soldier's manner was perfectly respectful. He would willingly have seen the misleader

of Bessie dead at his feet, but discipline was strong within him, and he merely looked like a figure in cast-iron, modelled to represent passive determination.

"Let me see Sir Allan for a moment," said Father Eustace, trying to advance. "My good man——"

"I am not a good man,—at least not as you mean, sir," interrupted McRonald, firmly placing himself in his old sentinel's attitude; "there is no pass-word here."

"In the name of the Church, allow me to enter," said Father Eustace, in a tone that would have overawed a whole congregation of Papists, but it fell on the ear of McRonald, who was, when necessary, gloriously obstinate, like foam on a precipice. "Old man, if you oppose my will, which is the will of the Church, and therefore the will of One greater than the Church, may no sun ever shine on your grave. I must see Sir Allan instantly, and I shall."

McRonald merely made a military salute, and muttered to himself in an under-tone the old proverb, "Threatened men live long."

"You are refusing the privileges of the Church to one of her most devoted proselytes, and braving all the frightful consequences of doing so," said Father Eustace in a tone of suppressed fury. "It would be Sir Allan's first wish, if he dies, to secure his own salvation by dying in the habit of our order."

"And while doing so," said Lady Edith drily, yet almost smiling at the priest's self-satisfied audacity, "to leave your order all his property, present or to come. Really, sir, I most heartily wish, for the sake of peace at Clanmarina, that the Pope would abdicate in your favour. There would be at Rome a wider scope afforded to your genius for priestly domination."

"Infernal heretic!" muttered Father Eustace malignantly.

"The term which you apply to me of 'a heretic,' means a wilful choice of error, knowing it to be error, therefore I have no intention ever to deserve that nick-name of reproach," said Lady Edith calmly. "In what terms the misleader of Sir Allan deserves to be spoken of, there can be but one opinion amongst honest men, a fraternity to which you are, I fear, a stranger."

"Madam," said the infuriated Father Eustace, "I am a priest. For your own sake remember that to affront a priest is one of those sins for which there is in our Church no absolution. We term it a reserved case."

"Those who made these laws are the priests who benefit by them," said Lady Edith, turning away with a conviction that she spoke to one very far below contempt. "If the means used by you and your associates to entice converts, were used to bring Mahometans round to Christianity, who could ask the blessing of God upon them? Have you then really convinced yourself that such a guerrilla warfare is justifiable?"

Father Eustace, seeing how impossible it would be to out-talk or to out-manceuvre Lady Edith into the smallest concession, where

duty, principle, and affection bid her be firm, unwillingly turned away, while Lady Edith quietly enjoined the well-pleased McRonald, during the next month, never to open the entrance-door without keeping the chain upon it. Well might the baffled monk have then exclaimed in angry bitterness of spite:—

“ Oh ! to have pray'd and toil'd—and lied—for this ! ”

CHAPTER XL.

“ Sloth and folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear.”—Rowe.

“ He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust.”
Macbeth.

FOR many days and nights there had been in Sir Allan's room a silence and darkness like the tomb itself, while the sun rose and sunk and rose again, unobserved by those who anxiously watched by the sick-bed on which he lay tossing and delirious with fever.

The tall, portly, rather bustling sick-nurse sent by Dr. Campbell from Inverness, seemed one Friday to have become unusually quiet, and sat cowering the whole afternoon close to Sir Allan's pillow, but making signs for every one who entered the room to remain very quiet, and to keep at a distance. She complained of a severe toothache, which seemed of a most obstinate nature, as it never became either better or worse, and she sat rolled up in an enormous shawl, with her cap so drawn over the face that Beatrice whispered to Lady Edith, “ She was a perfect Mrs. Gamp in attending our patient till now, being visible occasionally, but to-day we appear to have got Mrs. Harris, who was never seen at all ! ”

Once, when Lady Edith entered Sir Allan's room, the nurse, with an apron thrown over her head, was fast asleep after the fatigues of her night-watch, and the next time on that day she was so occupied in mixing medicines and in preparing poultices, that she could not be spoken to.

That night Sir Allan had an alarming relapse into low feverishness. His pulse sunk away till it seemed almost imperceptible, and became so rapid that it could not be counted. Dr. Campbell was astonished and completely perplexed. He had ordered wine, brandy, meat twice a-day, rest, quietness, and several cordial restoratives, all which had been till this day most efficacious, but suddenly Sir Allan was in as sinking a state as if he had ceased to take the remedies at all, and as if he had met with some great mental shock. It was most unaccountable, and all hope must soon be extinct if the young

Chief did not make a wonderful rally. Even Lady Edith's courage sunk, and, unable any longer to control her grief, or to hold up her aged head under such a weight of sorrow, she allowed Beatrice to lead her away from the room, where night and day she had watched so long, that for a few hours, at least, she might try to rest her utterly exhausted frame.

Beatrice remained anxiously beside her benefactress, endeavouring to soothe her agitated spirits by every device of affectionate ingenuity, and Lady Edith had been for some time immovable with her eyes closed, when Beatrice fancied that in the deep stillness around her, she heard a low murmuring noise, as if it proceeded from Sir Allan's bed-room. At first she thought it was the wind moaning down the chimney, but the sound was too even and low. Still she thought it impossible for any conversation to be going on, as no one had been allowed to sit up with Sir Allan but the sick-nurse, who promised that not a fly should stir in the room; yet Beatrice listened intently, and became convinced that a voice was audible there, as if some one were in a low, dreamy, indistinct tone reading aloud. She cautiously rose from her seat and proceeded on tip-toe to the door. It was no mistake. In the silence of midnight, a voice proceeded from that room, low, and solemn, and continuous. Could it be Allan delirious? Yet the sound was so very monotonous that it seemed very unlike the ragings of fever? No! the voice was not Allan's!

Noiselessly and cautiously, as if she trod upon egg-shells, Beatrice advanced along the passage, and extinguishing her light, groped forwards in the dark. She followed the sound, pushed the door imperceptibly open, and discovered the room brilliantly illuminated with six large wax-candles surrounding a stucco image of the Virgin Mary. Sir Allan was supported upon his knees in bed by Mrs. Lorraine, and Father Eustace stood holding up an ebony cross for him to kiss. The exhausted sufferer seemed evidently much more dead than alive, and there was the wandering light of delirium in his burning eyes. Beside the bed lay Mrs. Lorraine's bead remembrancer, and a number of legal looking parchments, with pens and ink which had evidently been used a few minutes before, as the signatures were not yet dry. While she stood there panic-struck, Sir Allan asked in a fainting voice, "Does the doctor order me no wine to-day? I feel sinking so rapidly."

"No," replied Mrs. Lorraine. "His instructions are that you keep the season of fasting as a faithful son of our Church."

The patient looked both surprised and disappointed, but made no reply, and Beatrice, who knew how earnestly the doctor had enjoined wine or even brandy, listened in silent horror to this lie so coolly told for the good of the Popish Church.

Beatrice, when she first saw Mrs. Lorraine, had with difficulty restrained a scream of consternation, and now remained for a moment so thunderstruck that she neither moved nor spoke. The

next moment she fled along the passage, making not so much noise as a mouse would have done, to summon Lady Edith. Much she dreaded to awaken her aged benefactress when so agitating a scene was before her; but well did Beatrice know that the cause was one in which Lady Edith would lay down her life without regret, if Allan might only be rescued.

In an instant Lady Edith comprehended rather than guessed that the sick-nurse from Inverness had accepted a bribe from Mrs. Lorraine to let her own place be assumed by herself, that indefatigable masquerader in the Jesuit school, and that she, taking advantage of the position thus established, might probably have opened an entrance at the well-barred door for the priest. He once beside Sir Allan, could not be afterwards ejected without some such scene in words or deeds as, around the sick-bed of her exhausted invalid, would cause his instant death. Lady Edith, her whole spirit on fire with indignation, but her steps tottering with age and fatigue, instantly called up all her servants, at the same time cautioning them, and especially McDonald, on no account to act without her especial orders.

"What shall I do?" she whispered hurriedly to Beatrice. "Think for me—act for me! I am completely bewildered!"

"From what I overheard," said Beatrice, "Allan had made a scruple of receiving the Holy Sacrament at present, and Father Eustace was urging him to receive *une communion blanche*, a blank communion, which the Papists give in such cases, without consecrating the Host at all."

There was within Sir Allan's room a small apartment, leading to a narrow back stair. In that room, to prevent all effluvia from the medicines, every bottle had been placed.

When Lady Edith, leaning on Beatrice, and followed closely by McDonald, opened the bed-room door, they saw that the patient having fainted, Father Eustace and Mrs. Lorraine had both hurried to the dressing-room in search of restoratives, and were hastening back. In an instant, with the speed of thought, Beatrice flew forward to the dressing-room door, and locked it. Not a second had elapsed, and both the Papal intruders were prisoners. It mattered not now that they almost battered down the door in their vain efforts to return, for the noise of a cannon could not have disturbed the still, cold form of Sir Allan, insensible on the bed.

McDonald having received his directions from Lady Edith, at once proceeded up the back stair, followed by the gardener, both armed, and the old soldier, livid as death with the effort he made to control his passions, walked deliberately up to Father Eustace, exhibiting an aspect so determined, that few could have had courage to withstand it, and certainly not Father Eustace. It was evident that force would be used if quieter means did not prevail, yet the priest had much at stake, and he hesitated, while a thousand guilty, as well as self-interested fears, rushed into his mind; but his hesita

tion could not last above a minute when he saw the fierce resolution expressed in every feature of McDonald's soldier-like countenance. Father Eustace retreated,—not a word was spoken on either side, but in a few minutes he and Mrs. Lorraine had emerged together into the midnight darkness of the garden, and were both locked out by a careful sentinel, not again to be deceived or surprised, who muttered indignantly to himself, "They should both be indicted for stealing into a dwelling-house."

Lady Edith, meanwhile, had found in a place of concealment the wine, brandy, and food which Sir Allan was supposed to have taken during the previous day, when he was, in fact, superstitiously keeping the strictest fast of Friday, as instigated by Mrs. Lorraine, and the consequences now were mournfully evident, as Lady Edith, when she placed her hand on his heart, could not discover the slightest pulsation. Still some warmth remained; therefore she sat silently down by the side of Sir Allan, and taking up a teaspoon, put some brandy between his motionless lips. This Lady Edith continued perseveringly to do for nearly an hour, till at length the patient heaved a low, almost inaudible sigh, then a nearly imperceptible pulsation might be observed at the heart, and his eyes feebly opened.

Beatrice meanwhile advanced to inspect those suspicious-looking parchments scattered on the table, which were, as she expected, documents by which Sir Allan legally resigned all his estates, moveables, and property of whatever description, into the hands of certain trustees whom he named, entirely cardinals and priests, to receive the same for the benefit of their Church. Some of the signatures were not yet perfectly dry, which Beatrice hurriedly beckoned up three of the maids to observe, and that the deeds were dated a week back, as if they had been signed early in the morning of Sir Allan's birthday. A long list of witnesses was also appended, including Lord Eaglescairn's butler, gardener, coachman, and grooms, as testifying to this extraordinary document, which they had never even seen. Beatrice felt a strong impulse to burn these fraudulent deeds, but conscious that this would be both imprudent and wrong, she again enjoined the maids to observe how many of those imaginary signatures, scarcely dry, were written but a minute before in the absence of the parties, and then carefully locked it up.

From that hour Lady Edith, in dumb anxiety, sat immovable by the bed-side of Sir Allan, carefully excluding even the light of day, and often at night allowing the fire to burn itself silently out, chilled as she felt, rather than hazard disturbing her precious patient by a single sound. For the most devoted assiduity she felt more than rewarded at last by a faint smile from Sir Allan, and a low feeble word of thankfulness. No one except Dr. Campbell and her own servants entered on any pretext, to watch the almost imperceptible progress which Sir Allan was supposed to be making, and hour after hour Lady Edith remained, with no companion but

her own pious thoughts, and no support for her almost desponding mind, but those promises of the Gospel with which her memory was amply stored, and which appeared to her so distinct that they needed no interpreter.

Lady Edith now experienced all the advantage of an intimate acquaintance from childhood with the Divine Oracles, for she could repeat to herself with never-ending delight, whole chapters full of encouragement and hope. Much as she loved human sympathy and now enjoyed its consolations, yet she found a still greater relief in opening her whole mind to her Creator, conscious that there is no impediment between the voice of a suffering mortal and a pitying Saviour, except in that rebellious human heart which will not accept a pardon on the terms offered, without money and without price, as a free and generous gift.

Weeks passed on, and Sir Allan had regained a considerable degree of bodily strength. His tall, commanding figure, his intelligent expression, his whole aspect in the prime of youthful grace, were restored to apparent health, yet a deep depression seemed to weigh heavily on his mind. He was unable for conversation, but there was a solemn depth of thought in his eye, when he occasionally looked up, which Lady Edith felt to be very impressive, though she did not attempt to intrude within the curtain thrown over his thoughts, unless he should lift it by speaking out. Dr. Campbell observed that every attempt to converse brought on an accession of the pulse, and his repeated injunctions to silence were most conscientiously obeyed by Lady Edith, who devoutly considered it the special will of Divine Providence that Sir Allan should be withdrawn for a time from all external influences, and thrown upon a solitary review of himself.

One day, Lady Edith heard her patient repeating over, in an under tone, some of his favourite poems, and when at length he came to the beautiful lament for Lord Douglas, which he had often formerly repeated to her, she heard him say in accents of mournful self-reproach, and with a deeply-speaking expression of countenance—

“Baffled nature hangs dejected by,
And hails the shade of Allan with a sigh.”

“Surely you are better to-day?” said Lady Edith, laying a kind hand on his arm. “Let me have you conveyed to the window, that you may inhale the fragrance of that lily of the valley and mignonne.”

“Aunt Edith, my worthless body may recover,” replied Sir Allan, in a low tone of depression, “but my torn and shattered mind is a wreck never to be restored. It is said that the most endurable, though the sharpest of all earthly evils, is sorrow for the dead, and I wish you had that to suffer for me, rather than all the affliction I have caused your kind heart.”

"My very dear Allan, why sit down to be regularly miserable? why not look for a rainbow in your cloud?" answered Lady Edith in a tone of remonstrating cheerfulness. "The excess of grief has its own strange attraction, and even despair itself becomes a state of mind that people are unwilling, after long habit, to leave off. I would not needlessly jar at present against any feelings that have become dear to you, and therefore I dare not now speak to you with my former ease; still you know of old, Allan, that I consider it a religious duty to be happy. In your case, I can see no sufficient warrant for being miserable, but you are in that morbid state which delights in a perfect luxury of woe. My dear Allan, you must consent to be made happy again. Let me set a trap to catch a sunbeam for my dear old pupil."

Sir Allan took Lady Edith's extended hand in his own, with the saddest, but the kindest of smiles, and said in a low, melancholy, thoughtful voice, "I seem once to have lived in a paradise on earth, where dear Aunt Edith acted as my guardian. Since then times have altered, and I have altered, but oh, how dear to my heart is the memory of those hours! I did not deserve such happiness, and I never can be happy again."

"No one ever merited happiness, Allan,—not the best and wisest human being who ever adorned the earth; but still there is for you yet, if you will only look upon it, a radiant horizon of hope and of consolation. Do not let yourself be so fascinated by looking into the deep gulph of human misery, that you cannot look up to the bright prospect of human pardon and felicity. A few weeks of mental rest—perhaps, Allan, a few weeks of our agreeable society, may do wonders. Cheerful thoughts and kind old friends are Dr. Edith Tremorne's best prescriptions now."

The beautifully modulated voice of Lady Edith, low and tremulous with emotion, was full of the deepest tenderness, and of the most heartfelt joy, at observing how much her words appeared to soothe Sir Allan's agitated nerves, and before much more time had elapsed, many of the past delusions of his mind seemed to him like a confused and painful dream. Every moment of life became inestimably precious to him, as the representative of a vast eternity; but at the same time, the mere fopperies of religion had shrivelled into their native insignificance, before the strong light of calm reason and deliberate reflection.

"What boundless gratitude I owe to the early instructions of Mr. Herbert!" said Sir Allan one day. "Oh, that I could enjoy one hour of his conversation now! That would, perhaps, make me feel young once more. That would bring the verdure and freshness of boyhood to my heart again. That would clear off all the cobwebs and thistle-down with which my poor brain has been clogged."

"Dear Allan," said Lady Edith mournfully, "our revered Bishop is now at the end of his bright and useful course. That good and

faithful servant of God cannot survive many weeks, and his peaceful state of readiness is truly enviable. Dr. Campbell tells me that the Bishop is entirely confined to bed now, with no hope of his ever being able to leave it, again. He has a heart complaint, and an entire break up of the constitution."

Sir Allan covered his face with his hands in very solemn emotion, but made no reply, though he continued evidently in deep thought during some hours. In the evening he had, for the first time, remained up to tea, and though unable from weakness to take any part in the conversation, his eye followed with more than usual interest all that was said by the three ladies, and especially by Lady Anne, who looked, in her chastened and pensive loveliness now, like the name given her by Sir Allan during their first acquaintance; "the white rose of Stratharden." The young Chief, as he gazed at the pure and chastened loveliness of her beautiful countenance, repeated to himself these lines:—

"I have play'd the coward,
And, in the sloth of false humility,
Cast by the pearl I dared not to deserve,
How laggard I must seem to her if she love me !
'Tis not too late."

The evening twilight streamed into Lady Edith's sitting-room, diffusing its gorgeous hues on every surrounding object, and all nature looked in a state of prosperous felicity, when a chariot unexpectedly drove past the window at which the party were sitting, and stopped at the garden gate. Lady Edith, never doubting that this was an invasion from Eaglescain, felt satisfied that McRonald would be quite sufficiently peremptory in excluding strangers; therefore, not an anxious thought crossed her mind on the subject till the door of her drawing-room slowly opened, and she saw several persons advancing.

McRonald's whole countenance was flushed and excited with joyful surprise when he entered, supporting on his arm the venerable Bishop of Inverness, his hair white as snow, his form attenuated to a perfect skeleton, his step feeble and tremulous, but his eye bright with a look of intellectual benevolence. There was a solemn composure in the aged prelate's aspect; but there was the stamp of death on every emaciated feature of his countenance, as he languidly advanced towards Sir Allan. Breathing with difficulty, the Bishop appeared for some time unable to speak, while agitation as well as infirmity combined to render him silent.

The Bishop being placed on a corner of the sofa next to Sir Allan, held out his thin white hand with a look of dignified affection to his old pupil, who grasped it in his own with affectionate fervour, but turned away to hide the livid grief in his countenance and the tears that fell drop by drop on his faded cheek. At length the aged Bishop found voice to say, in a whisper broken with emotion,

"I have risen from my death-bed, Allan, to see you once more. The hourly miracle of human life is soon to end for me; but, as you know, the blessing of an old man, even if we differ, can bring no one any harm, and I bring you mine."

A solemn pause ensued, while the Bishop became evidently engaged in prayer. He then raised his eyes with mournful kindness to the face of Allan, at which he earnestly gazed, and laying his hand impressively on the arm of his much-loved pupil, he continued with quivering lips and in an accent of the profoundest emotion. His fine old head now reminded Lady Edith of Goethe's, "a grand cupola lighted from below:"

"I see you thus, Allan," he said, "and yet my heart does not break! Years have passed since we met, but only days or hours can intervene now till we part,—perhaps for ever! I nightly pitch my moving tent a day's march nearer home. Allan McAlpine, the words I now speak are among the last my voice is ever to utter on earth. At the call of duty I came here, hoping yet, perhaps, to deliver from ruin my long-loved parish, my long-loved congregation, and my long-loved pupil. Seeing the grave open at my feet, I have wished that my dying prayers be uttered here. The first consecrated voice which ever taught you, Allan, the worth of your soul, may possibly be listened to now, as an expiring testimony to Scripture truth, before the tomb closes darkly between you and me."

Lady Edith, Lady Anne, and Beatrice, sat as immovable as if turned into marble, while Sir Allan raised himself from the pillow to listen more earnestly, and the venerable bishop with difficulty continued,—“You have been most unexpectedly placed in this house by what seems the special intervention of Providence. Here, in the cool depths of a calm retreat from all dangerous excitements and from all the bewildering heats of controversy, you have lived in darkness and solitude alone with God. I trust, Allan, that you have felt the comfort of a direct access to His throne of mercy. I feel as sure as that I live, breathe, and speak, and must soon cease to do so, that the privilege of private prayer is granted to each individual man; for our Lord came personally upon the earth to testify, by His holy companionship with men, that it is to himself face to face, without any intervention, that we are permitted to appeal. The Apostles, when asked by the jailor at Philippi, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ did not say, ‘Come to us as priests and confess.’ They did not sell him an indulgence, nor desire him to pray to the Virgin and saints. No, their simple direction was, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.’”

“Go on,” said Sir Allan, in an earnest, though feeble tone, “your voice is very dear to me. It seems like the echo of happier days.

“‘Old loves, old fancies,
Buried for years, leap from their tombs, and proffer
Their magic service to my new-born spirit.’”

“Nothing in nature is so extraordinary to me as the dislike men

have to ask their own pardon of their own Saviour. Let us suppose an illustration of such conduct. For instance, my very dear pupil, I have travelled far to-day for this meeting, and you must be aware that I would cut off my right hand, or put out my right eye, to benefit you. Suppose that now, instead of frankly making me any request, you turned away from me and whispered aside to Lady Edith or to Mrs. Clinton, both my much esteemed friends, that you wished they would intercede with me to grant you a special favour; might I not naturally say, 'Why employ another? Why not believe that, coming to serve you, I am ready to do so? Why ask any intervention, when my whole mission here is, with one only desire to prove that there is nothing within the compass of my power which, if you ask it from myself, shall be denied?' Can any woman who ever was canonized, be as able or as willing to protect us as our own divine Master?

“‘Though now ascended up on high,
Christ bends on earth a brother's eye;
In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of sorrows had a part.
With boldness, therefore, at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known,
And ask the aids of heavenly power,
To help us in the evil hour.’”

These lines were repeated by the Bishop of Inverness with a depth of fervour never to be exceeded, and his aged voice shook with emotion. The venerable man appeared almost to see that which is invisible, and required no tangible image of wood or stucco to bring before his bright benignant eye the vision of Him, whose form and whose words, engraven on his heart, were never for an hour forgotten in his best affections. The Bishop of Inverness needed no external genuflexions or crossings to express the fervour of his devotion; but while his languid body remained still as a corpse, his eye shone with intellectual devotion as he added, in a voice of intense solemnity—

“Soon, very soon, I shall be in the immediate presence of a hitherto invisible Saviour. Soon my home shall be where most of those I ever loved have long ago preceded me, and nightly I return thanks for every friend safely departed in the faith and fear of God. In old age we sleep little, but those long hours of darkness are added to my time for preparation, and I meditate on that closely impending hour, when the grave, as little to be feared as my bed, shall receive this worn out body till the resurrection. ‘Tis the great birthright of mankind to die.’ If my attached friends and congregation were to divide every bone of my remains as relics amongst them, placing my fore-finger with a glass case over it, in the church of Clanmarina, and my arm in the cathedral of Inverness, how much would I prefer the privilege of Scripture, ‘dust to dust!’”

"Yes, the remains of Joseph were carried from Egypt, not to be worshipped, but buried," said Lady Edith, "and my last request would be like that of Shakspeare, that none shall 'move my bones.'

" 'You will not let the mob, when I lie dead,
Make me a show—
Pull off my hair—pluck off my finger-nails—
Wear scraps of me for charms and amulets,
As if I were a mummy, or a drug?
As they have done to others.'—*Saint's Tragedy.*

"Life often reminds me," said Lady Edith, "of people wading in the sea. At first, like a group of playful children on the shore, we scarcely wet our feet in the sparkling foam, and laughingly watch the successive waves as they roll and break, against the firm beach on which we stand. Gradually the water becomes deeper, and our progress grows more heavy. The waves become threatening, the billows rise, and many of those who set out with us disappear beneath the tide. Still the survivors advance into deeper and deeper water, the waves overwhelming them, till the elder pilgrims, like you and I, Bishop, stand in the front rank, about to sink, yet exhorting those behind to persevere and follow."

"Yes," replied the aged prelate impressively, "I must ever be ready to welcome the very bitterest dregs of that cup which my heavenly father has wisely prepared for me. I am waiting most willingly and most cheerfully to drain the very last drop now; but I cannot accuse myself of ever having voluntarily taken on myself any avoidable sufferings. I have been always as obediently ready to accept the pleasures of this pleasant world as its evils, knowing that God's will appoints both in their proper measure. It is a part of my religion to be happy and to make others so."

"True," answered Lady Edith. "If a skilful physician prescribed for our health two medicines, one sweet and one acid, we should not fulfil our duty of obedience by doubling the last and leaving out the first."

" 'He who made the stream of time,
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.'"

"I often accept it as one of the clearest evidences afforded us of an intelligent God watching over his own world, that not an individual escapes being disciplined by the acutest sufferings of life. Not one human being is ever for a single hour perfectly happy; but we are bound to await the will of God, receiving our appointed share of good or evil with equal submission. I desire neither pleasure nor suffering unless it be intended for me, and soon I shall be raised 'above the reach of human pain—above the flight of human joy.'"

The venerable prelate, with an expression of pleasing seriousness, then looked towards heaven, and solemnly added, "There have been griefs in my lot to be mourned while life or memory remain. The last and greatest, Allan, will be, if my favourite pupil and my

former parish be alienated by a vile conspiracy from real Christianity, and led to adopt a false imitation of it."

Day after day passed on, during which the Bishop of Inverness gained strength, and Sir Allan most gladly took advantage of so favourable an opportunity to renew those old times which he had never ceased to remember with delight. Every morning saw him strolling before breakfast, his countenance full of new life, his eye sparkling with intellectual light, beside his venerated old friend in the garden. Every day they spent some hours in the library together, where the good and learned Bishop discussed, one by one, every point on which Sir Allan had been misled, turning from volume to volume for confirmation of what he said with a readiness only to be exhibited by the profoundest of scholars.

The Bishop thus proved that Christianity at its fountain had been in the early ages pure as crystal; how in subsequent years, wood, hay, and stubble had defiled the stream; and how eventually at the Reformation the original river separated the two,—the one half going towards Rome, polluted by a thousand abominations; and the other half, being constantly filtered through Scripture, came forth in England clear, bright, and wholesome, fit for the enjoyment of every mortal, without money or price.

The first time that Sir Allan was able to reach the garden he strolled with Lady Anne and Beatrice, to a summer-house, gorgeous with roses and jessamine, the birds singing themselves hoarse, and the gentle breeze that fanned the convalescent invalid came laden with the perfume of wall-flowers and of mignonette. Lord Iona, who made his personal inquiries for Sir Allan every day, had joined the party, and greatly enlivened it; but the conversation at length took a graver turn, when the Bishop of Inverness appeared, slowly advancing with Lady Edith, who gladly took her place in the cheerful circle of her young guests. They had all continued in animated conversation for some time, when Sir Allan at length said in a tone of pleasing sensibility,—“There are moments in life which compensate for years of suffering, and there are remembrances dear to the heart that neither time nor distance can obscure. Your voice, my first and best of instructors, has, like a flash of lightning in the dark, recalled to me a vision of my past self—my free and happy boyhood.”

“You gratify an old friend, Allan, and a very true one,” answered the Bishop, kindly. “I have greatly feared—I need not now say what——”

“Then fear no more!” interrupted Allan with unusual vivacity. “Heatherbrae has been to Father Eustace the Moscow of all his conquests. How a solemn impression of all I have escaped seems burned into my very soul! It will last for ever. Such as I am now, death at my latest hour shall find me—a true and heartfelt Protestant. That enlightened faith shall hereafter direct my prayers, my thoughts, my affections, my hopes, my very dreams

In health or sickness, in solitude or society, on sea or land, in life or death, my faith is unalterable. Once more then, my dear Bishop, let me take my old place in church, and also be received at the Holy Communion."

"In approaching the altar, Allan, a Protestant communicant is answerable for his own intentions only, but in the Romish Church all depends on the intention of the priest. Through him alone grace on all occasions is supposed to be conveyed. The so called infallible Council of Trent has decreed, that however properly the form of administration may be gone through, the whole ceremony is null and void unless the officiating priest intended to administer it.—'Whoever shall affirm that when ministers perform and confer a Sacrament it is not necessary that they should have at least the intention of doing what the Church does, let him be accursed.'"

"It seems to me as puzzling as mesmerism, free-masonry, or mathematics. Do these words mean," asked Mrs. Clinton, who had now joined the party, "that if the priest does not intend what he appears to do, he becomes a non-conductor between the Christian worshipper and his Creator? Do the Papists suppose that a sinner may be prostrate, soul, body, and spirit, before his Maker, in an agony of penitence, or in a glow of grateful devotion; but that the officiating priest being absent in mind, or careless in spirit, such prayers never can reach the Throne of Grace?"

"So it is decreed by the Council of Trent, the chief authority in all Popish questions," answered the Bishop. "No Romanist therefore can ever be certain that he has really received a single Sacrament of any kind in the whole course of his life. Had the priest who baptized you a right intention? and when the priest who baptized you was himself consecrated by a bishop, had that bishop the right intention? If not, the priest's orders are not valid. He is not then, in the opinion of Papists, an actual priest. The Popish Missal says,—'If any one has before him eleven wafers, and intends to consecrate only ten, not determining which ten he intends; in these cases he does not consecrate (that is, any of them), because the intention is required.'"

"Then," said Mrs. Clinton, "where is that secure and peaceful refuge to be found, from all uncertainty and doubt, which is promised by the Popish Church? Among Papists, more than in any other Church, the succession of bishops from the Apostolic days must be a broken chain, because who can tell what were the intentions of those in subsequent ages who consecrated them? If Lord Eaglescairn had been obliged to prove that when his predecessor died it was the late lord's intention and wish that he should succeed, no lawyer would undertake the case."

Lady Edith privately thought that there could not have been a better illustration, as the last words of Lord Eaglescairn had so evidently shown that his intention was very contrary to what actually occurred in the case of the present peer being his successor.

"In the Protestant Church," continued the Bishop, "we have only one Mediator, but in the Popish there is one in every pulpit arrogating to himself a Divine mission between God and man, to claim which no mortal that ever breathed can become entitled."

"I remember your saying long since what I never forgot," said Allan, "that you and many other Protestant clergymen dread above all things any additional power given to the clergy, as it has often made them the greatest of tyrants."

"Most true," said the Bishop meditatively; "those who have the misfortune to fall under priestly domination may often feel inclined to say, like David, 'Let me fall into the hands of God rather than of man.' A desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall, and the Popish priests arrogate to themselves a power never bestowed on mortal man, to decide what souls shall be saved or lost. They thus assume an elective franchise, to which they can show no title. It is not by the vote of such self-constituted electors that men are to attain a place in eternity, as he who brings the suffrages of all mankind may nevertheless be rejected. Those whom the priests hold up to the world as models of every Popish perfection may no less find mournful cause one day to exclaim, 'Cursed is he of whom all men speak well.'"

"I remember last year," observed Lady Edith, "seeing the funeral of a young man who had been so selfish, and so utterly spoiled by his parents, that he literally died a premature old man from dissipation; yet when the coffin was carried out of his old home his mother said,—'My son's body goes now to the dust, but his soul is already in heaven!' Every mortal would wish to canonize his deceased relatives,—it arises often from family pride or love of patronage: but no sanction can be found for doing so, and one can only account for the attempt by considering the natural bias of human nature which strives so strongly, so fearfully, but so vainly to interfere with the counsels of eternity."

"My lesson is learned now of unquestioning submission to them," said Sir Allan, in a tone of grave decision. "By all I value on earth, and that is still much," he added, with a glance towards Lady Anne, "I shall endeavour to accept my destiny, and to be exactly what my Creator intends:—to live in this country where he appointed me a place, to cherish the friends He has gathered around me, to believe that Christianity consists more in making others and myself happy than miserable, and cultivating health of mind and body, to live energetically devoted to the good of man, and to the glory of God."

"Then may a blessing rest for time and eternity on your active efforts! You have a very wide field of influence," said the Bishop, pointing to the beautiful village and the scattered dwelling-houses on the bright and distant landscape; "therefore teach all your dependents, from your own happy example, how best to play for life's tremendous stake."

"It is one that I had very nearly been cheated of," replied Sir

Allan, gravely, "but now I may say in the words of L'Estrange,—
He that loses anything and gains anything by it, is a gainer by the loss."

"True," answered the bishop; "and now, my dear old pupil—

"It rests with you, whether the priest be honour'd;
It rests with you, whether those fields grow corn;
It rests with you, whether those toiling peasants
Lift to their masters free and loyal eyes,
Or crawl, like jaded hacks, to welcome graves.
It rests with you—and will rest."—*Saints' Tragedy.*

CHAPTER XLI.

"Yes! I must headlong into seas of toil,
Leap forth from self, and spend my soul on others.
Mere contemplation palls upon the spirit,
Like the chill silence of an autumn sun;
While action, like the roaring south-west wind,
Sweeps laden with elixirs, with rich draughts."

Saints' Tragedy.

It had long been proverbially the greatest of intellectual enjoyments to converse with the Bishop of Inverness, for every heart and intellect became enlarged under his influence, though few could fully trace the source from which so much pleasure was derived, as it was more felt than observed. The current of his conversation, abounding with traits of the finest sensibility, and mingled with inexhaustible stores of anecdote and illustration, never seemed too deep for those who were his companions at the moment; while his extensive knowledge, enlivened and illustrated by a vivid imagination, touched brightly on the profoundest subjects, like a moonbeam on the ocean, giving to all he said a sparkling vivacity most attractive and truly delightful.

Lady Edith had been sitting one morning, after Sir Allan had sufficiently recovered to come down stairs, with her convalescent patient, and the rest of her welcome visitors, enjoying beyond measure a discussion in which they were all engaged, relating to the immense proportion of happiness intended by God for his own world if it were gratefully received and rightly used, when their attention was suddenly attracted by a distant noise, which seemed to come from the village, as of a rolling sea, or of a raging hurricane.

"The election takes place next week," said Sir Allan; "but as my nomination has been withdrawn by Father Eustace, there is not likely to be any more than common excitement at Clanmarina on that account."

The sound subsided for some moments, and then arose once more, apparently nearer and much louder than before while Lady Edith

listened, wondered, and finally rung for McRonald, the explainer-general on all village affairs. The old veteran was unusually long of appearing, and when he did lingeringly enter the room, the ladies were all surprised at his evident unwillingness to answer their inquiries respecting the cause of this extraordinary uproar. McRonald evidently knew something which he was resolved not to tell, for his face was flushed to scarlet, and his eyes glittered with a look of fierce delight, so unlike his usual quiet, respectful, subdued expression before his venerable mistress, that Lady Edith, if she had not known for many years past that he was a teetotaler, would almost have fancied that there must be whiskey in the case.

McRonald having hurriedly muttered that there were some idle people on the road making a riot, which would soon be over, was hastily withdrawing, when a deeper hum of voices and a louder roar than ever startled the whole party from their seats, while the ladies, really intimidated by its angry sound, flew towards the window.

When Lady Edith anxiously looked out, she saw approaching in the direction of her own house, like a rolling sea, crowds of men, women, and children, all evidently in a state of high excitement. She thought the whole village united could not have produced so numerous a multitude, all armed evidently with scythes, flails, pick-axes, and old rifles, while their voices were united in one exciting chorus of yells, shouts, execrations, and hurras. Meanwhile the leaders in front grasped hold of one individual whom they seemed to drag unwillingly along, while he struggled to escape, and at every such attempt, in which he was overpowered, fresh shouts followed of vehement execrations and of angry laughter. Lady Edith in agitated astonishment looked round at McRonald for an explanation, but he continued inexplicably happy and silent. His eyes were expressive of the greatest delight, and though he began an unfinished sentence by saying, "I am very sorry, my lady," yet Lady Edith began to suspect he was hurrying off to join the fray, as he had almost disappeared out of the door already, when in an imperative voice that must be obeyed, she called him instantly back, saying,—

"McRonald! I see you know more about this affair than you choose to acknowledge. I insist on your explaining what is the cause of that extraordinary riot." It seemed as if Lady Edith might as well have spoken to the Falls of Niagara, and expected an answer. McRonald, as silent as a catacomb, busied himself about the room, and was evidently making towards the door to escape, when Lady Edith imperatively called him back, saying to the evidently disappointed old soldier that he must not stir till the riot was over.

"You see, my lady," replied McRonald, gazing out of the window with all the eagerness of a schoolboy detained from his cricket-field, "that foreign priest, Father Eustace, seems to have a motto of his own, that honesty is only the best policy, if there be no

easier way to gain your ends. Old Farmer Carre died this morning, and the monks have produced a parchment in which he leaves every sixpence to them. We, in Scotland, call such legacies 'a mortification to the Church,' but it is also a very great mortification to his relatives, as his own sons are left penniless. This news has gone all round the village. As a natural consequence, my lady, the people have all risen in that hive-like uproar, and are going to——"

"Stay, McRonald! Where are you hurrying?" asked Lady Edith, looking as McRonald afterwards said through and through him, till he felt as if nailed to the wall. "What are they about to do?"

"To duck him in the salmon-pool, my lady. He has not a feather left to fly with, and they are carrying the parchment before him as a banner mounted on that flag-staff," answered McRonald, his old eyes gleaming with pleasure. "You see, my lady, there! Every man of the village carries a paper round his hat, with the words written on it, 'No Popery!' The Romish chapel was pulled down this morning, the pews torn up, and all the pictures and images burned in a bonfire."

"McRonald!" exclaimed Lady Edith, indignantly, "why did you not tell me all this sooner?"

"I was afraid your ladyship might not approve."

"Approve! of course not," said Lady Edith, rising. "It is a lawless mob! The poor Clanmarina villagers must be brought to their senses, or there may be bloodshed."

"Not a drop, my lady! Just as I feared," muttered the old soldier. "Her ladyship will spoil all, but I hope it is too late now to rescue Father Eustace. He deserves the worst that can befall him, and more. Lady Edith would spare even that man's feelings and fears."

"I trust," asked Lady Edith, "that Robert Carre has not been irritated into joining in this outrage?"

"No, my lady; he exhorted his neighbours to let the law take its course, and he would be righted either now or in a better world," said McRonald in a low voice of the deepest sympathy. "Poor Robert! his arms, that used to be like bars of iron, are hanging by his side to-day in helpless sorrow. The old place of Daisybank is very dear to him, and his father's memory. My own poor Bessie too, for he still loves her! It is a sad wreck, my lady, and you cannot wonder if we all feel for him."

McRonald roughly passed his hand across his eyes and turned away to hide his emotion, then hurrying to the door he said, "I'll just step out, my lady, to see what is the upshot."

Some mill-stones are very easily seen through, and Lady Edith plainly perceived where the warmest sympathies of McRonald were hastening, and that he was now in the state of one of his own soda-water bottles, wired down, but on the point of exploding. A louder shout than ever now resounded from the crowd, all in a delirium of excitement. An Irish mob is like straw, easily set on fire, and as

easily extinguished; but Scottish rioters, like wooden faggots, are slow to light, yet burn far more fiercely when once roused to a flame. Long had the anti-papal feeling smouldered at Clanmarina, while the honest villagers saw their own Chief seduced into forsaking his high position, their long-loved pastor, Mr. Clinton, carried off from his once happy home, and poor Bessie kidnapped into a convent; but now, since old Carre of Daisybank, the stoutest Protestant in Clanmarina, had been, as they said, "bamboozled on his death-bed into disinheriting his own dutiful son," the cup of Father Eustace's crimes seemed full to overflowing, and Justice herself had no scales in which to measure the weight of his guilt.

McDonald had been always a good hater, and though this noisy act of unruly vengeance was not quite according to the disciplined habits of an old soldier, yet detesting the perverter of his own Bessie with the whole intensity of his excitable nature, McDonald would gladly have been a ringleader in the riot if he dared disobey the known opinions of Lady Edith. He would have died a martyr at the stake, to see all the many schemes of Father Eustace frustrated; and as the mob, like a rolling sea, came roaring and yelling onwards, he could restrain his eagerness no longer, but waving his highland bonnet in the air, he welcomed their tumultuous approach with a shout of encouragement, such as he had given when leading on his followers to the forlorn hope at Bergen-op-Zoom.

A loud hoarse hurrah from the mob had welcomed his appearance, and McDonald was about once more to cheer them on, with his most vehement sympathy, when a hand was laid on his arm, and looking impatiently round, he beheld the pale and anxious countenance of Lady Edith, her lip quivering with agitation, but her eye expressive of gentle command, as she said in low earnest accents, "McDonald! you must stop those madmen, or they will lay up for themselves a lifetime of repentance. There is death in their faces, and they will murder that man! Can it be possible that I saw you encouraging them? Go now,—stand in the middle of the road and ask the foremost to stop. You see the ringleaders are all McAlpines from Clanmarina, and they will attend to you."

Never did the old soldier obey any order so unwillingly. He would have stood at the command of Lady Edith in the way of an express train, or a menagerie of wild beasts broken loose; but to impede the clansmen in venting on Father Eustace one relentless and unmitigated discharge of their long-delayed vengeance was a very severe test of his obedience. Still the aged warrior's habitual respect for Lady Edith rose superior to all the pleasant excitement of punishing a culprit, whom with his whole soul he abhorred, and discipline prevailed over natural impulse. Touching his cap respectfully, though, truth to say, somewhat sulkily to Lady Edith, he made one or two commanding strides across the road, and placing himself like a colossal giant before the front rank of the fiercely excited mob, he called on them in a military accent to halt.

The people paused in astonishment, while the loud, gruff, angry sound of their voices became for an instant hushed; but the momentary lull was soon over. The mob seemed about to proceed with renewed vigour, again uttering fierce cries and menaces; but when they became convinced that the old soldier was trying in earnest to stem the current, Andrew Carre shouted to him angrily,—

“Have they called out the military, and brought you, McDonald, rank and file, to disperse us? Clear off there! McDonald, I never expected to see you side with the Papists. You might as well attempt to lay all this dust on the road with a single water-cart as to stop us now. I thought you were of the right sort, and quite a brick!”

“If I were a brick, I would throw myself at your head!” replied the old soldier, gruffly endeavouring to hide his own real feelings, and half angry at a jest of Andrew’s on his being commander-in-chief of the forces at Clanmarina; “stand at ease there!”

“I may stand back,” replied Andrew, sulkily, “but I’ll never stand at ease while my good old uncle’s property is taken from his own son. Who is safe now, if Carre of Daisybank, who lived and died the best of Protestants, is to be buried a Papist? No, McDonald! you may stand there making all the signs of the zodiac to stop us, but I’ll never believe that your heart is with the Papists that carried your own Bessie away.”

McDonald stopped his unwilling pantomime of signals to allay the mob, and pretended he had done his utmost as a peacemaker, when Lady Edith herself, at length alarmed at the increasing tumult, pale and agitated, opened the little gate of her garden, and stood silently before the clansmen of McAlpine. In an instant the fierce clamour gave way to a feeling of reverential awe; the storm of hisses and execrations was heard no more; and every cap was respectfully lifted, as their aged benefactress appeared. Tears glittered in Lady Edith’s eyes, when she beckoned up to her Andrew and Duncan Carre, nephews of the recently deceased farmer, who carried his supposititious will as a banner floating aloft over their heads, and said in an earnest tone of touching appeal, while they looked at her with a half-awkward and half-defying expression,—

“You have had great provocation, but do not put yourselves frightfully in the wrong, Andrew and Duncan. Do not madly take justice into your own hands. You may, perhaps, do in a moment now deeds which, through time and eternity, you will both repent! I feel most deeply for you, and for your excellent cousin Robert, but the laws of God and man must not be broken. Trust to them for justice——”

“Yes, yes!” replied Andrew, in a voice and with a look that evidently meant “no.” He then added in a tone of remorseful respect, “I wish your ladyship were, for once, a worse adviser. We know you are right, but we wish on this occasion to do wrong. We can

dare and die in such a cause as this, but we cannot now be stopped. That man deserves all he can suffer."

An angry groan from the crowd at this momentary delay was followed by a louder shout than ever. It was evident that more instantaneous justice than any laws could sanction was now to be exacted by the excited mob; for some were exchanging hurried sentences in an under tone, and an hundred eyes were fixed in one unrelenting gaze on Father Eustace, who hung his head, so that no one could tell what that long-disciplined face expressed of anger or fear. To stop the mob now seemed as hopeless an attempt as that of the Sicilians, when they coax Mount Etna to abstain from an eruption; for the villagers' faces clouded darkly and ominously still, and McDonald turned to Lady Edith, saying,—

"Your ladyship might as well endeavour to put out a fire by drawing up buckets from a waterless well. They will not be checked, and they cannot be; it is like trying to put a lid on the top of Mount Vesuvius!"

The noisy clamorous cavalcade was now about to proceed in its furious progress, when Lady Edith turned to those nearest her, saying, in a voice of piercing anxiety,—“Have I lived among you so many years in vain? Will none of you listen to one whose only wish is for your good? Think what Sir Evan would have said!”

Several of the clan McAlpine, after a moment's hesitation, disengaging themselves from the roaring whirlpool, respectfully advanced, cap in hand, towards the gate, and stood as if awaiting Lady Edith's orders; but others hesitated; when suddenly Robert Carre, pale as a spectre, hurried through the crowd, and calling on them not to stir, said in a tone of deep feeling to Lady Edith,—

“We ought to have but one wish amongst us, Madam, now—but one—to obey our best of friends. Lady Edith Tremorne, in Clanmarina, might speak the savageness out of a mad dog. Let no friend of mine oppose what she desires.”

“But,” replied his cousin Andrew, “is this man to get off with impunity, after committing a death-bed robbery? It is a crime unknown and undreamed of by any of us till this hour! May every shilling he gets by Daisybank blister his fingers, and blister his conscience for ever. To rob a church is bad, but to rob for the church is very little better.”

The mob had become impatient to proceed in their wild career, when at this moment the Bishop and Sir Allan, to whom Lady Edith had sent an intimation of the impending danger, were seen slowly advancing together. When the crowd, who had believed their long-loved pastor to be far distant on his death-bed, saw him now, as if risen from the grave, and the young Chief whom they had believed to be again at Eaglescairn, now standing among his old Protestant friends, a sudden burst of rapturous emotion from the whole concourse rent the whole skies. Many rushed through the gate to welcome their venerated Bishop; numbers in

succession grasped his hand, and all united in another and another shout of obstreperous delight, echoing, and re-echoing to the very hills, for Sir Allan, the Protestant Chief of McAlpine.

All that could have been said in a scene of such tumultuous joy, was for several minutes useless or unintelligible, while the Bishop feebly supported himself on Sir Allan's arm, his white hair streaming in the wind, his pale countenance like that of a corpse, his eye full of melancholy calmness, but his whole expression dignified with intellect and benevolence. After pausing for some moments to ascertain that there was silence, he said, in a voice of habitual authority, yet of the most parental kindness,—

“My dear friends, little did I expect that in this world we should ever meet again! My own course on earth is ended, and standing, as I do, on the very edge of the grave, it seems to me strange now that anything in existence can cause so much angry excitement as I see among all my old friends at this moment. Life appears to me already a dream, and only death a reality. Think how short is the interval that divides the dust we are from the dust we shall be! Do not, then, prepare a pang for your last hours by doing violence in this case. Release that prisoner, whom you have no right to retain, and trust to God that in this life, or in a far better life, justice will be done by One, who cannot err, and who knows all.”

The fine solemn voice of the Bishop was dear to the memory of all present. It fell like snow-flakes now on the burning anger of the excited mob, which became dumb and motionless, while their deeply-honoured Bishop, with increasing feebleness of body, but undiminished energy of purpose, continued:—

“Religious differences, my old friends, are much too solemn to become the subject of angry strife, or of animal force. Let us pity those we consider wrong, but never persecute them. I invite your prisoner to take a safe shelter within this garden. Let him enter in peace, Lady Edith, here; your best of friends desires it also: therefore, let not one of you attempt to impede him, but each return quietly to his own home, and take my fervent blessing—my last blessing with you!”

The shouting multitude of Clanmarina had become tranquil, as they gazed on the time-worn countenance of their long-loved Bishop, so pale, and so worn. As the glow which had been brought to his cheek by exertion subsided into a ghastly paleness, their voices and their hearts became blended into one universal expression of simple kindness, and of intense emotion. They observed with deep interest, too, how tremulous was his voice, how tottering his step, how feeble his whole aspect; and yet how true and how earnest was the attachment with which their old friend and pastor gazed, probably for the last time, on those who had so long been his flock. The mob, after a time, felt that their love and obedience could be best shown by dispersing; and they gradually melted away, it would be difficult to say how; but McRonald,

indignant to see the culprit about to escape unscathed, indignantly muttered to, himself,—“The clan is no better now than a stale bottle of soda water, when the cork is out. I never thought to see so much good anger thrown away! They might have at least made him promise to leave the neighbourhood. But I forget; no promise to heretics would be binding.”

Father Eustace, looking very meek and crestfallen, was released from the grasp of his assailants, when he made no hesitation in obeying the welcome summons of the Bishop to take refuge in Lady Edith's garden from the obstreperous and dangerous escort which had surrounded him, and who were now expending their wrath by burning an immense Guy Fawkes in the centre of Clanmarina.

The priest, having been hospitably invited to partake of some refreshment in the house, remained at Heatherbrae till it was safe to go home, and had his soiled dress re-arranged by a most unwilling valet, in the person of McRonald. Father Eustace was disappointed, however, to find that, by the orders of Lady Edith, he was conducted into a sitting-room alone, as none of the party felt bound to associate with one whom they so utterly despised. Being now in a state of bodily safety, however, any affront fell as powerless on Father Eustace as the sword of Richard on the pillow of Saladin. He stood for some moments with his eyes fixed on the ground, while his cheek was still lividly pale, and said to McRonald when ushered into a room, in accents of angry contempt,—

“For the sake of those idiots themselves, I am glad to be safe. The mob was becoming formidable, but one fool makes many, and it is my duty to forgive and forget.”

“You will do neither, or you are no Jesuit,” muttered McRonald between his teeth; “there is no anger so vindictive as that of a priest; but I am not to be humbugged. We did but act in self-defence; yet, as he is our enemy, he will always think that we are his, and behave accordingly. If malice can reach any of us, we shall soon feel its power.”

Before leaving Heatherbrae, Father Eustace sent a slip of paper to Sir Allan, requesting a private interview; and the young Chief, feeling himself braced up in mind and body for the worst, determined to see Father Eustace, and at once put an end to all hope of his being again deluded into the dreamy and imaginative state to which his mind had been so long and almost mysteriously enslaved. It was a singular meeting, when Sir Allan entered, for the cunning Jesuit at once took it for granted that he again met an obedient and devoted proselyte. Stealing at Sir Allan a searching glance full of purpose (and who would not have quailed beneath that eye so indicative of power?) he began to speak with sly contemptuous pity of the heretic mob which had attacked him, as well as of the heretic Bishop who had released him.

Assuming his “fatherly” tone, and rolling his eyes with a look

of affected piety, the wily priest proceeded to regret that Sir Allan had been unavoidably associated during his illness with persons so totally unsuited to his enlightened state of mind; but observed, that any gratitude to such persons was by no means required, as, on the contrary, whatever might naturally have been his own personal feelings, it was now his duty to sacrifice them.

"Self-denial and holy obedience require that you leave this house with me to-day. Humility calls for this surrender of your comfort, your convenience, and even the safety, if it be so, of your health; I, as your spiritual guide, command that, however hateful or revolting to your natural feelings, you bid these heretics a hasty farewell, or no farewell at all would be better, and immediately accompany me to Eaglescarn."

"Father Eustace," replied Sir Allan, in a tone of deep-seated emotion, yet of manly energy, "it seems to me as if, within these few weeks of solitary thought, scales had fallen from my eyes. I have been almost miraculously preserved from the final renunciation of all God's gifts,—my property, my feelings, and my whole freedom of thought or action. A spell was over my soul, which is broken. I look back at myself as a recovered lunatic might be supposed to recal the delusions of his cell, and see that the vows I was about to take would have made me your slave for life, body and soul. If you, a mortal man like myself, and of the same fallen sinful nature, had ordered me to commit the greatest of crimes, I should have been allowed no choice, whether it were to commit a treason against my sovereign, or the meanest villany against my neighbour, such as cheating an old man on his death-bed, or decoying an innocent girl from the protection of her domestic home to a dungeon, or heartlessly leaving my kind friends here without any thanks for their care."

Father Eustace listened in a perfect stupefaction of rage, but he preserved his usual corpse-like attitude, his feet and hands together, and his eyes on the ground, looking exceedingly like a lay figure, while Sir Allan, with increasing energy, hurried on, saying,—

"Before you relieve me of your presence, let me fully explain how my soul revolted long since from the degradation of mind and heart to which my uncle subjected me at College, when his sleepless eye was on me, and his continual discipline, like the incessant dropping of water that wears away the hardest adamant. You know how he made me swear, as a test of holy obedience, to be a tale-bearer, and repeat whatever my companions said which could criminate them. He offered me an indulgence for my own faults, provided I could criminate others. In truth, a common informer is not so bad as you and he would have made me, for it is not those who trust a common informer that he betrays. For months my uncle did not even allow me at any hour of the night or day to shut my own door and be alone. Others were spies on me, as I was desired to be on them. In case one might be confi-

dential with another, we were obliged to go always in a party of three, that there might invariably be one traitor present. I abhor and despise myself, that a Highland chief and British gentleman could be so degraded! No Turkish slave was ever more considered his master's property than I was my uncle's, who has long pulled the wires of an obedient puppet; but now, I solemnly take upon myself the position in life that God has evidently appointed for me, to enjoy all its privileges, and to do all its duties. I have been set on the road to happiness, and the fault is my own hereafter if I do not pursue it, zealously and well, without slavishly obeying that superstition which would have taught me to worship more deities, lesser and greater than the Lares and Penates of Pagan mythology."

"Do you forget, Sir Allan," asked Father Eustace, in his blandest of tones, "that the Council of Trent passed a decree in favour of Saint-worship, enjoining us to instruct our flocks respecting the invocation of saints, the honour due to relics, and the lawful use of images? That decree declares that those who say it is foolish to supplicate the saints reigning in heaven, entertain impious sentiments."

"Father Eustace," replied Sir Allan, "I have often been told that the agony of becoming sober after intoxication is so great, that it might cure any one of drinking; and, truly, my own return now to my sober senses, after being in a Popish delirium, so fills me with shame for my past folly, that it will prevent all danger of a relapse. I do not now believe that any human saints reign over our earth, nor acknowledge any but those recorded in Scripture. No mortal beings hear our prayers, nor does real religion consist in visiting those tombs where their bones are indiscriminately decaying to ashes. None were ever permitted to know where Moses was buried, to prevent, probably, all extraordinary reverence being paid to his remains; but you and my uncle tried to persuade me that when the coffin of a saint is opened, it emits a delicious fragrance, and that a fleshless skull has even announced its own name, its former residence, and all the circumstances of its decease. No, Father Eustace, from such a religion of dead men's bones and all manner of uncleanness, I am now and for ever emancipated. The lasso was dexterously thrown over my neck, but the captive is free again! Many thinking Christians believe that a time of persecution is again to arise in England, when no man may call his life his own; but should your frightful adulteration of Christianity become supreme in Britain,—should the reading of Holy Scripture become a capital offence, and our glorious land become once more devastated with superstition, I shall be found ready to contend for liberty of conscience, and the worship of an only Saviour. In such a cause, who might not welcome a martyr's grave, and a martyr's crown? In the words of Addison's hymn,—

"Not in mine innocence I trust,
I bow before thee in the dust;
But in my Saviour's blood alone,
I look for mercy at thy throne."

CHAPTER XLII.

"Who serves the Master of the Pope is wise,
Who serves the Pope a fool."

BEFORE the Bishop of Inverness retired, worn with his exertions of body and mind, to bed, he joined Lady Edith's cheerful tea-table, where in a high state of comfort Lord Iona had as usual made his way good, and who exercised his uncommon power of making amusement and pleasure, where ordinary minds would have seen only sadness and sorrow. Before his gay sunshine of mind, dulness passed away like a summer shadow, and all the party, except the heart-broken Mrs. Clinton, felt the frost of depression melting away like a Russian winter. For her there remained only "the dull deep pain, and constant anguish of patience."

"What nerve you ladies displayed this morning during the riot!" said Sir Allan, turning to Lady Anne; "I am usually a total disbeliever in hysterics, but you treated us to not so much as a fainting-fit, a smelling-bottle, or ever a mere glass of iced water!"

"We shall postpone such scenes till you require some excitement, Sir Allan. I knew a lady once, who always fainted at the head of her own dinner-table when the conversation flagged, and her exit in a state of insensibility was of immense use in dispelling ennui, as well as in giving people something to talk about."

"It must have been a troublesome manœuvre for the husband, who would be obliged to carry her out. I hope my wife in such a case may not weigh above nine stone five or six."

"I rather pique myself on having discovered a mental alchemy for myself, that turns the base metal of discontent and weariness into the bright gold of gaiety and happiness," said Lord Iona in his wonted tone of most attractive good-humour; "my plan is the reverse of Father Eustace's, who turns the gold into dross. Every generous feeling, every noble sentiment, every independent action, he would put into his own crucible, to be debased into slavery and wretchedness."

"It is strange," said Lady Edith, "that though parents watch the first symptoms of fever in the children they love, no precautions are taken against the earlier tendencies or the gradual increase of the Popish fever in our families, when every English home is now besieged by it, and when the dereliction of any one member is worse than his death. How much recent misery might have been spared had such a guard been kept over those who ought to be watched with affectionate influence!"

"It is a wonder," said Lord Iona, looking very misanthropical, "that the whole civilized world had not risen *en masse*, to banish the Jesuits from every community, as the common enemies of virtue

and mankind. Better to be in the chariot of Mark Anthony drawn by tigers, than to drag on life deprived of liberty, virtue, and intellect, beggared in fortune, and denuded of every earthly attachment. I learn daily more and more the inestimable value of affections founded on esteem, and on entire confidence," added Lord Iona, with an earnest glance towards Beatrice, who coloured deeply, as she met his eye gleaming with animation and sensibility, while the fervent tone in which he spoke rung a peal of pleasure in her ears as he continued in an undertoned whisper to herself, "Pray, Miss Farinelli, is love such as mine a thing you believe in at all?"

"Perhaps I do," replied Beatrice, with a yet brighter scarlet on her cheek.

"It is impossible you should not," answered Lord Iona; "If you did not love me, I should hate myself. Every law that ever treated on reciprocity, commands you to believe in and to reciprocate my long trial—at least for several weeks—attachment. You know, Miss Farinelli, the old fairy tale says, that souls are all made in pairs, and carried down to the earth in balloons which break on touching the ground. The two wander apart in misery till they are reunited, which very seldom happens in this wide world. You and I had very nearly missed each other, and the result would have been most calamitous to both, but now 'all's well that ends well.'"

"Not so fast," replied Beatrice in a low under tone; "I have heard that which makes it not impossible for me one day to be happy, but till the good news is confirmed, I dare not promise myself, nor any one else, ever to see me otherwise than I am. There are at present you know, as I consider, impediments——"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Lord Iona with good-humoured petulance, "the impediments are all your own invention; you made all the giants, and you must positively kill them for yourself, as I cannot even see them. You like giving up your own will, in your own way, but let me hope you may not be obstinately cruel now, for I really cannot stand it. All the unwelcome things you said to me formerly, are now like the mist of a half-forgotten dream; but my heart has always cherished one bright undying hope of future felicity, and there can be no happiness to me without you. I grasp at any straws, therefore, that will preserve me from the deep waters of despair."

The cheek of Beatrice flushed deeply, and her eyes betrayed a tremor of sensibility, for she felt this a strange crisis in her existence, when the love that had remained so long unspoken, might perhaps now be, for the first time, fully acknowledged. She feared to say too much or too little, and sat in unutterable felicity, but in a degree of fluttering embarrassment which scarcely dimmed the perfection of her happiness, while Lord Iona, encouraged by her evident emotion, spoke to her again and again in accents of the deepest tenderness and of the most ardent hope. She wished, yet

feared to tell him how entirely his devoted love was appreciated, and returned, but felt that to her the privilege had not yet arrived, as to the Psyche of fabulous times, to unveil her own heart.

"Let me consult an oracle as to my future hopes," said Lord Iona, in a tone of hopeful vivacity, increased by the evident bashfulness of Beatrice, who rose to hurry out of the room in agitated confusion. "Do you remember in the 'Gentlemen of Verona,' when Speed says, 'Will it be a match?' Launcelot answers, 'Ask my dog; if he say "Yes," it will be; if he say "No," it will be; if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will be.' Now here on the rug is your own Shako, ready to give his opinion, and a very favourable one it evidently is. Good Shako! wise dog! Positively I can do nothing from morning till night now but read advertisements addressed 'to persons about to marry!'"

Beatrice blushed, smiled, and hastily vanished, while Lord Iona, full of hope, happiness, and gay anticipations, threw himself on horseback, and galloped to the world's end in a ferment of felicity for which his horse paid the penalty of being thoroughly knocked up, while the animated rider repeated to himself these lines of an old song:—

"I wad do—what wad I not,
For the sake of somebody."

Lady Edith had been kept long awake by many interesting thoughts, which were at length forming themselves into pleasing dreams, and vanishing again in a more profound slumber, when she was aroused to the vague consciousness of some unusual commotion in the house. She sat up to listen, and became certain that there was the scuffling sound of many footsteps passing up and down stairs, the suppressed tone of agitated voices, the hasty opening and shutting of doors—all told a tale of some sudden alarm, and under a dizzying sense of apprehension, Lady Edith hurriedly threw on her dressing-gown. With hasty, yet noiseless steps she then followed the sounds that had awakened her, till she found herself in the Bishop's room, where the servants in speechless grief were gathered around him.

The venerable prelate, evidently in the last stage of prostration, was supported up in the bed by his own servant, pale with agitation and sorrow; while McRonald was chafing his feet, already cold and insensible. Still his dying eyes beamed with an expression that testified more than words could have done, "Now all is well, and I die in peace!" Though the pallor of death was on his cheek, there appeared a calmness in his whole countenance of a tired child about to sleep. For several minutes he lay, his livid cheek resting on the shoulder of his mournful attendant; but when Sir Allan, pale with grief, hurriedly entered, the aged prelate made an effort that seemed almost supernatural to speak, saying in a tone of mingled humility and confidence, "At last the hour of my

departure is come, my friends. Death is a tremendous necessity. I go, Allan, to that world where error is unknown; it seems to me strange indeed now, long as I have expected this, that I am actually passing away. I look with a sort of farewell curiosity at everything in this vanishing world. It seems as if I had never observed them before, as if the beautiful sunshine were new to me, and all your faces that I am to behold no more." He paused for several minutes, but the doctor having administered a cordial, the Bishop's strength became wonderfully revived, and his whole heart seemed in his eyes when he again looked at Sir Allan, saying in a tone of overwhelming solemnity, "I have prayed,—oh, how fervently! that my own beloved pupil may be preserved from the snares around his path. Allan, dear Allan, receive this my own Bible, and may it light you, as it has lighted me, along the only safe and sure path through this dark valley, into an unfathomable eternity. Farewell, Allan! My latest earthly care is for you! My voice fails, my sight fails, but not my faith. I have a steady fearless reliance on the written word of God,—and on that only."

The Bishop's breathing became so impeded that for several minutes it was impossible to articulate, but he closed his eyes, and in a voice reduced to the lowest whisper, earnestly repeated several prayers from the Service for the Sick; and when his voice at length ceased, he had fallen into an insensibility from which he recovered no more. His was now the long, deep, unbroken sleep of death. All was over; or rather, to the emancipated soul passed into eternal felicity, all was now begun. The shock was overwhelming to those who loved that best of men, the Bishop of Inverness; and deep was the respectful sorrow with which together next day his afflicted friends deplored their incalculable loss.

"For when the morning came serene,
And dim with early showers,
His quiet eyelids closed—he had
A happier morn than ours."

There were no frantic bursts of grief, but the assembled circle each mourned in silence awe-struck, though not fear-struck, at this sudden blow. All expressed a fervent hope that they might live as their good Bishop had lived—a Bible-Christian on the best model, and die as he had died, in a simple undoubting faith in one only Saviour and Mediator.

"Truly," observed Lady Edith next day, in a deeply meditative tone, while she gazed out of her window at the clouded mournful sun battling through the heavy fog, "our own poor Bishop has long been, as it were, an out-door servant of his great Master, exposed to the clouds and storms of an earthly career, but now he is called home into a Father's house, there to find shelter from every blast! No man valued life more than he did, or felt a more solemn awe in laying it down, and his composure was not from fearlessness

of death, but from a Protestant belief in the immediate happiness awaiting his redeemed soul at once in a far better world."

"Certainly," observed Lady Anne, "if he had depended on the intercessions of men and women, born in sin like ourselves, he must inevitably have been tortured by the fearful apprehension of a long enduring purgatory, perhaps to last for centuries."

"Life is a terrible, but a glorious gift, and I have always felt overawed by its importance," said Lady Edith, meditatively, while Sir Allan's flushed cheek and contracted lip betrayed how deep was the affliction. He tried to subdue; "yet how affecting and how consolatory is the sorrow of those we leave behind; how sad it would be to fall like an autumn leaf unnoticed and unlamented! To the old, like myself, and to the dear revered Bishop, all that human friendship can do for us is to shed a tear over our last remains. Allan! when we are both laid at rest in the grave, remember your two old friends, and all we endeavoured to teach you; the generation to which you belonged will then stand forth, in the front rank, where I stand now, awaiting the reaper's hand. May you then be found ready and willing to depart with the same placid intrepidity as our lamented friend and bishop!

"My soul, that fluttering hastens to be free,
Would yet a train of thoughts impart to thee,
But strives in vain; the chilling ice of death
Congeals the blood, and chokes the stream of breath.
Resign'd she quits her comfortless abode,
To course that long unknown eternal road.
O sacred Source of ever-living light!
Conduct the weary wanderer in her flight;
Direct her onward to that peaceful shore,
Where peril, pain, and death prevail no more."—*Falconer*

CHAPTER XLIII.

"How is this,
That thou art here, unlook'd for at this hour?"—*Baillie*.

In families and neighbourhoods, after a long interregnum of health and prosperity, who does not remember a time when it seems as if a sudden outbreak of sickness and death were about to empty the world of all those they have loved or known, and as if nobody would be left on the earth? So it appeared to the older inhabitants of Clanmarina, when, after following their revered Bishop to his last home, they heard that Lord Eaglescairn was not expected to survive the night.

In a lofty and spacious room hung with tapestry and pictures, and on a bed hung with curtains of the richest velvet, which were thrown widely back for air, lay the dying man, in a state of bodily

and mental suffering that his worst enemy, if he had one, might have pitied. No language can describe the ghastly anxiety expressed in his wasted features, as he gazed at Father Eustace, who sat beside him alone, sprinkling his face occasionally with holy water from St. Victore's well, and holding up a blessed chaplet in *articulo mortis*. The religion of human coinage was here exhibited in all its feebleness and deformity. No mourning relatives were permitted to approach the expiring sufferer,—no sympathising friends; but he had received the last offices of his Church, and nothing was left for him now to do but to die. His pale lips quivered, his mouth was open, his looks wandered from place to place, as if in search of consolation, till at length he turned his face to the wall in speechless anguish, and shunned the eye of Father Eustace, which had been sternly fixed upon him, while he muttered inaudibly Latin prayers for the agonizing, which might as well have been in Chinese or Hindoo, for any appeal they made to the heart or conscience. At length, unable any longer to control his emotions, Lord Eaglescain with sudden strength sat up in bed, gazed anxiously around, as if in search of some one, and then said, in accents of piercing agony, "I cannot die in peace with my secret untold! From the day of that shipwreck, when you persuaded me, for the interests of the Church, to defraud that girl of her inheritance, never has my miserable mind known one moment's peace. You tell me, like the Duke of Burgundy's confessor, that you will take upon yourself the punishment due to my crime. That promise seemed very sufficient when I was well; but now!—" Lord Eaglescain covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud with agony and apprehension.

"There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul."—Byron.

"Remember," said Father Eustace, in a consolatory tone, "you have there a crucifix blessed expressly by the Pope for a happy death."

Lord Eaglescain raised his livid face, gazed upon it for a moment, in the hands of his confessor, with a look of unutterable woe, then pushed it hurriedly away and buried his face in the pillows.

It was the dead hour of midnight, and all was still. The fire had gone out, the candles burned low in their sockets, and dark were the shadows in every distant corner of that large room in which the confessor and his penitent were alone.

"My son," said Father Eustace, "you know despair is in itself a sin."

"Yet hope must be denied to a being of crime and impenitence like mine," exclaimed the dying man. "Had I relied on my conscience it would not have deceived me, it would never have ceased

to reproach me, it would have judged and condemned me; but you put my conscience to sleep, or rather to death, and offered me the use of your own! My sins, during health, were like caged lions that could not reach me till now, but a dying memory lets them loose to-night, like wild beasts in the desert. Yes, my sins have found me out. I must confess all."

"My son," said Father Eustace, assuming a tone of gentle remonstrance, "you have confessed——"

"No, no, no! I need not confess to you, my accomplice," interrupted Lord Eaglescairn, with a look of dull horror,—“you who were my instigator. There are no disguises in death! Who can warrant me that your absolution is ratified?—that your bail is accepted? No! Call my son. He already suspects something. He must be told all. He will do justice”——

"Not to-night," replied Father Eustace, in a tone of authority. "Dr. Cameron ordered you till to-morrow the strictest silence and solitude."

"To-morrow I shall have the unbroken silence and solitude of the tomb. For me, the next hour that strikes is eternity! The first yawning grave shall be mine. Let my son be summoned now."

"Impossible. I owe it to my Church and to myself that you do nothing so rash and presumptuous as to act against the advice of your confessor," replied Father Eustace, observing with imperturbable calmness the frenzy of anguish and despair painted in the wan features of Lord Eaglescairn, now pinched and sharpened by approaching death. "You are excited and nervous. Take this composing draught, and we shall talk over all your desires and fears afterwards."

"At a more convenient season, which will never come!" muttered Lord Eaglescairn, grasping the bed-clothes with a look of livid despair. "My poor disinherited son, from whom I have alienated all in my power to your Church! What will he think? What can he do? Send him to me now, and torment me no more with your false promises and pretended miracles. Can you still maintain that, by an absolution such as yours, the dark mass of my crimes could become whitewashed like an old house? No! My whole existence of late has been a lie. I have acted a part too long, but I will act no more. My conscience has been chloroformed, but it is now most fearfully awakened. Send my son instantly. It is no man's affair but my own how I die."

"It is the affair of the Church; and it is my affair that you do not injure her by an unseemly death," said Father Eustace, in a low tone of fierce determination, his whole form expanding with rage, while a gleam of intense wretchedness shot through the features of the dying man. "Do not forfeit the merit of a whole life by nervous terrors now, by open disobedience and disbelief. Let your dying testimony be a crowning effort, so that your family, servants, and tenants, may see an example ——"

"Not an example, but a warning!" exclaimed Lord Eaglescairn, in a voice of deep despair. "Let there be an end, now, of my atrocious deceptions. Have you the audacity to speak of my merit? Alas, alas! conscience is awake now, and will sleep no more throughout a long eternity."

Lord Eaglescairn's voice had become hoarse and low from intense emotion, and he grasped the arm of Father Eustace with a look of desponding anxiety; but there was nothing to hope from the calm stern eye of the priest, who silently held out the sleeping potion, saying,—“Remember, the first of duties is obedience. You are not to judge whether I, who command, am right or wrong, wise or imprudent, holy or imperfect; but I come in the name of our order, and your sole care must be to obey. You must give up all if you would gain all.”

"I cannot sleep. I have not time to sleep," exclaimed the dying man, rejecting the potion with fearful earnestness, "a world of gold for a moment of time! Do not oppress me in the last struggle of nature. The sharp stings of memory are tortures enough now!"

"Then," replied Father Eustace, "listen to these words from the Breviary,—‘If the winds of temptation arise, if thou run upon the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If, disturbed with the greatness of thy sins, troubled at the defilement of thy conscience, affrighted at the horrors of the judgment, thou beginnest to be swallowed up in the gulf of sadness, the abyss of despair, think upon Mary.’”

The patient now unwillingly received the draught recommended by Father Eustace in his hand, but with a fixed determination not to expend his few remaining moments in sleep. By a sudden gesture he directed the eye of Father Eustace for an instant towards the door, and during that moment secretly poured the whole potion noiselessly on the bed-clothes. He then laid his head back on the pillow, and seemed in a few minutes buried in most profound, almost deathlike repose. Father Eustace lingered for some time, but the low regular breathing of the sufferer convinced him that Dr. Cameron's medicine had taken most marvellous effect; therefore summoning the old sick nurse, who was busy studying the "Visions of St. Anthony," to take his place, he stole off silently to tell Lady Eaglescairn and Lord Iona that the patient still wished for quietness, and that he begged they would retire for the night, as it would relieve his mind to know they were in bed.

Lord Iona had been sound asleep for some time, when he was suddenly awakened by hearing his door slowly open, and the old sick-nurse approaching on tiptoe scratched upon the curtains in Jesuit fashion, to announce her presence. She then made Lord Iona a sign instantly to rise and follow her, which he did with almost trembling haste. The young man perceiving at once that this must be a summons from his father, hurriedly threw on his dressing-gown, and left the tottering old woman far behind, as he rushed

anxiously onward to obey the mandate, and entered in almost breathless anxiety lest Lord Eaglescairn might be at the point of death. No sooner had Lord Iona entered the room than his father raising himself with difficulty from the pillow, sat up in bed—made an imperative sign for his son to lock the door, and instantly to seat himself by his side, when in a low gasping voice he whispered,—“Are we safe?”

“Yes!” replied Lord Iona, in a tone of kind encouragement, “as safe as a closed door, and a trusty son can make you, my dear father.”

“Then now for the worst of all penances! To make my own high-minded and honourable son despise and hate me. Oh! that I were at this moment anything but what I am! The time is short—very short, and there is much to be done! Reach me that box. Here is the key, my own son,—and never part with it while you have life. Your father has been a guilty man. Often, oh! how often have I confessed it to my confessor, but never to any good purpose till now.”

While he spoke Lord Eaglescairn’s strong mind seemed broken down to the weakness of a child, and he wept like a feeble infant. His hands shook with emotion, and trembled with impatience as he unlocked the iron box, and hurriedly taking out a long roll containing several sheets of parchment, he tore off his own signature from the bottom of every page, and burned each separate fragment as he did so at the candle. A smile of ghastly satisfaction gleamed in his eye when it was done, and he whispered to his son,—“You were to have lost all, had you either become a Protestant, or married one. I have long and fervently wished you united to Beatrice-Farinelli. It was the only hope remaining that my crime could be repaired—the deepest I have committed, and they are many. Read those papers, and you will know all. It is hard to die, my son, feeling how you must learn to despise my memory —”

Lord Iona clasped Lord Eaglescairn’s hand in his own, and fervently kissed it, while Lord Eaglescairn, seeing the tears that filled the young man’s eyes, exclaimed, in a low, muffled whisper, “Now let me die. Before those tears are dried, my son, I would hide myself in the grave, from all that you have yet to learn. Blame me as you may, but pity me too. My life, from that fatal hour of temptation, has been one scene of splendid wretchedness. Many a time I have longed to tell you all the black dishonour of my conduct; to throw myself on your affection; but my conscience was in the keeping of another, who absolved me for everything. I have been watched, herded, ruled with a rod of iron, threatened with the terrors of this world and the next.”

The dying man sunk back exhausted and hysterical, but keeping Lord Iona’s hand clasped in his own, while the father and son gazed on each other, now at the last, with entire confidence and true-hearted affection.

"My son," whispered Lord Eaglescairn in trembling accents "when this hour comes to you, as it comes to all, may you be as happy as you now make me. I have long been forced to buttress up an edifice of falsehood,—be it your honourable task to undo my guilty work. Act by your own conscience, not another's, and, if possible, bury my faults in oblivion, though that is a funeral much too honourable for such crimes."

The faint breathing of the sufferer became low and interrupted, but there were no immediate symptoms of dissolution, therefore Lord Iona had quietly taken his place at the bed-side, in hopes his father might fall into a gentle slumber; when suddenly a heavy hurried step was heard lumbering along the passage; an attempt was made to open the door, the lock was tried in vain, and Father Eustace, in a voice of imperative authority, desired that he should be instantly admitted. Lord Iona was about to answer in a very decided negative, when Lord Eaglescairn, starting wide awake at the sound of that voice, raised himself up, looked wildly around with an aspect of fearful earnestness, uttered a low exclamation of horror, his lips moved, but there was no sound, and then sinking back in a fainting-fit, almost instantly expired.

When all was over, and after a few hours had elapsed, Lord Iona knew all. He found in the iron-box a letter to the late Lord Eaglescairn, from his second son, written by Tom De Bathe on his death-bed, at Madrid, to say that his wife, who had been converted to the Protestant faith, was, during his illness, secretly carried away by her Spanish relatives and imprisoned, he believed, with their infant daughter, in a convent, where the priests, one of whom was his brother-in-law, were resolved that the little girl should be brought up a Papist. The child's cousin, he said, Theresa Da Hosta, a clever, enterprising, and well-educated woman, now become Protestant herself, had a sister in the convent at Corunna, where his wife was supposed to be unwillingly concealed, and she was furnished with ample funds to seek out the child and its mother. As the unfortunate father had no hope of living above a few days himself, he had desired that if his wife and child were ever rescued, they should proceed instantly to place themselves under the protection of his best of friends, Sir Evan McAlpine in Scotland.

It was in pursuance of these directions that Theresa visited her sister in the convent at Corunna, where she ascertained that her late cousin had pined for some months with sorrow, and died under all the penitential austerities inflicted on her by Father Dominick, her brother, and the remaining priests, for having married a heretic. The beautiful child they were then educating to be a most fanatical little Papist, under the assumed name of Beatrice Farinelli; but Theresa having at once recognised her own young favourite, watched without ceasing, whenever she visited sister Angela, her own sister, in the convent of St. Bridget, until at length, after months or rather long years of hopeful perseverance, she succeeded in obeying the

will of the child's father, by carrying off the stolen Beatrice,—stolen from her own father to be kept in cruel and unjust imprisonment. A letter which Theresa had written before embarking, she directed to the child's own grandfather, of whose death she had heard no intelligence in Spain. This packet having been delivered to the recent successor, the new peer read it in company with Father Eustace, and thus learned that a young claimant was about immediately to arrive, and to be placed under the Protestant guardianship of his hated neighbour, Sir Evan McAlpine. This was not to be borne, yet it seemed inevitable, and day after day the agitated peer sat with his confessor in deep conclave, to consider the loss about to befall themselves and their Church.

How the shipwreck happened Lord Eaglescain never knew,—how the lights on the beacon at Clanmarina became changed that evening, he never conjectured, but so it was, that by an interposition which Father Eustace assured him was miraculous, a spontaneous fire had appeared on the summit of Cairngorum, when the Spanish vessel hove in sight, and at the same moment the blue light on Clanmarina headland as miraculously became extinguished. The twelve judges of England might have sat in judgment on the case with their black caps on, but Father Eustace never looked more composed than during the whole scene that followed; and at that time he had little difficulty in persuading Lord Eaglescain that after so supernatural an interposition on his behalf, it would be wicked and presumptuous not to accept so timely a boon, and that, for the child's own sake, she should be rescued from Sir Evan's guardianship, and securely placed in a nunnery, there to take the veil. "Every man has one chance in life," Father Eustace had said, "and, Lord Eaglescain, this is yours."

The Spanish relatives of Beatrice, who were rich and powerful, believing her to have perished in the wreck, made no subsequent inquiries respecting her; and as all the machinations of Father Eustace had failed to entrap Beatrice into his power, she had remained personally unknown to Lord Eaglescain, till their accidental rencontre in the garden. Then the beauty of her countenance and the charm of her manner, had first awakened in him a desire to remove from his own conscience the weight that had long and increasingly tortured him, in thinking of the crime by which he had been led into keeping estates that belonged of right to another. If Beatrice and Lord Iona were once attached, Lord Eaglescain felt that to her he could and would confess all. Whether his son became Protestant or not, seemed to the father of little moment, when Lord Iona's mind had been so lately verging to the gulf of infidelity, and when that of Lord Eaglescain himself was so bewildered with legends, and so startled by the undisguised wickedness of his own confessor, that it was only by a reign of terror Father Eustace still kept over his victim, almost to a dying hour, the iron rule of superstitious awe.

The Popish love of processions is one of those ruling passions strongest even at death; and now, by Father's Eustace's commands, the earthly greatness of Lord Eaglescain would have been most magnificently heralded to the tomb, had not Lord Iona imperatively forbidden any pompous rites. The emblazoned escutcheons, the sable mutes, the chanting priests, the massy gilt crucifixes, the plumed and stately hearse, and all the solemn splendour of superstitious pride were suppressed: surrounded only by relatives and domestics, and the ceremony consecrated by prayer, and by the silent tears of a dutiful son, within his own private chapel the body of Lord Eaglescain was restored to its kindred dust, and left to moulder undisturbed in the grave.

"Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from her frown
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,
Language and letters; these though fondly view'd
As humanizing grace, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude."—*Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER XLIV.

"Of Charity, what kin are you to me?
What countryman? What name? What parentage?"

SHAKESPEARE.

THOSE heathens who believe in a transmigration of souls maintain, that, after death, men unfit for heaven are born over and over again in a ceaseless succession of probationary lives, till they become perfect; but the Christian is conscious that at death the character of each mortal becomes finally stereotyped for eternity. Presumptuous sinners are forbid either for good or evil to pass a final judgment on each other, and it is not by the vote of mere fallible human beings that the place of any one hereafter shall be decided; yet those who had known the Bishop of Inverness, felt confident that no man could have left this world with a clearer conscience or a humbler hope of pardon in the life to come; for in him they had witnessed the persevering dedication of all his great energy to the best interests of others. Thus, if a man of sinful human nature could deserve to be canonized, his claim might have been sanctioned by those who knew him; but, all that the enlightened Christians he left behind could hope was, that he departed a forgiven sinner, and they rejoiced to believe that he was not now committed to the dungeon-keep of a miserable purgatory, to be bought-out only by expensive masses, or by the supposititious interference of imaginary saints. No! prayer could be of no more avail to his departed soul now than moonlight on his grave. The curtain of death had fallen

alike over the virtues of Bishop Herbert, and over Lord Eaglescain's crimes.

"How heartless and wretched I used always to consider the doctrine of purgatory!" observed Sir Allan in conversation with Lady Anne. "But every doctrine of that Church, which we both so narrowly escaped joining, is subversive to all rational happiness in this life, or cheerful hope in a better."

Whenever Sir Allan caught a glimpse of Lady Anne's black draperies among the flowers, he hurried out to join her in the garden, where happiness itself seemed scarcely happy compared with the delight their emancipated minds enjoyed together. It cannot therefore be doubted that Sir Allan's time was most agreeably spent among all the refined, benevolent, and devotional occupations of Heatherbrae.

"Hail, sweet society! in crowds unknown,
Though the vain world would claim thee for its own;
Still where thy small and cheerful converse flows,
Be mine to enter, ere the circle close."—*Rogers.*

It has been often observed that a disappointment in love is apt to make a man of quick sensibilities turn his affections to where he believes they will be more highly estimated, and that the heart sometimes makes a cannon at the rebound, so that the more severe the stroke, the more certainly it goes off at an angle in search of a gentler reception elsewhere. Sir Allan had long perceived that his influence over the affections of Beatrice was at an end; but his pliant nature soon found consolation from the gay vivacity with which Lady Anne welcomed his attentions, and all the hoarded tenderness of his nature became now devoted to her lively fascinations. Between them there had arisen an increased confidence, while often comparing notes on their own wonderful escape from the snares of Romanism, and on the doctrines they had both now abjured.

"That imaginary purgatory is the chief source of revenue to all Popish priests," observed Sir Allan. "My uncle, Father Ambrose, made me, on his bay-and-sell system of religion, pay 5,000*l.* for masses on behalf of my father's departed spirit, and more than double for Sir Evan's."

"I remember an instance of that," replied Lady Anne. "I once in the city of Antwerp wandered up an ascent rising at an angle of about twenty-five degrees, and on each side of the path were portraits and images of saints in perpetual succession. At the summit stood an ill-painted picture, about ten feet high, of our Divine Lord and Saviour, stretched upon the cross. A red wire to represent a stream of blood was made to pierce the canvas, and a cup was held below by the Virgin Mary. Underneath this scene was a representation of purgatory. I observed there twelve or fourteen heads cut out in oak, which were surrounded by flames that rose in every direction. Over that a text very much misquoted and perverted

from Isaiah, was placed, and a box below, of course, to receive money from the terrified spectators on behalf of the artful Romish priests."

"Lady Anne," said Sir Allan with emotion, "no two persons in the wide world have more experience of their machinations than we two. They would have extinguished for us the many sources of happiness with which a liberal Providence has wisely gifted us, but we must disappoint their plans. Let this day be to us the first dawning of a happy futurity. Let me not deny that I do seem somewhat like the man in the moon, who changes every month, and that both in love and religion I have been unsteady. A crushed and blasted heart, such as mine, fickle hitherto as a summer breeze, would be a very inadequate offering to one like you, who should be loved at once and for ever; yet, might we not still save something from the wreck of our youth and hopes? I never more can feel such rapture or such wretchedness as in former days; but might we not yet live for each other, and be happy in the calm sunshine which remains, enjoying a wiser and a holier felicity than we ever before promised ourselves?"

Lady Anne listened, smiled, blushed, and let her long eye-lashes droop over her downcast eyes, but she could make no answer, though a torrent of pleasant feelings rushed tumultuously to her heart. Her transparent cheek, usually pale as alabaster, became tinged with a glowing pink, that deepened into the hue of the pomegranate blossom, and she felt as if at this moment all the troubles of her past life had ended. The change in Lady Anne's whole feelings now was as sudden as a spring in Russia, where the inhabitants retire for the night with deep snow on the ground, and awake with flowers blooming before their eyes.

"To you, Lady Anne, with whom is associated now in my heart whatever on earth is beautiful, happy, or desirable, what a delight it would be if I might hereafter disclose all that I have ever felt, thought, dreamed, or suffered!" continued Sir Allan in low earnest accents. "Father Eustace, with his grand inquisitorial aspect, has long guessed and tried to undermine my increasing wish for domestic happiness, but in vain. He says that my estates were once church lands, which ought to be restored to his order, as no family thrives who has ever kept such property. But I could mention quite as many proprietors who have thriven remarkably well with similar possessions. My endeavours must be to return all I enjoy an hundred fold, by becoming, as Sir Evan was formerly, a steward of all I possess, faithfully devoted to the good of those around."

"How easily such sweeping assertions are made as that of Father Eustace!" said Lady Anne, indignantly. "A friend of mine is fully convinced that no individual ever thrives who has injured him. He has taken no steps to produce this result, but from the moment any one treats him ill, he says to me with perfect confidence, 'Mark that man, for you will see some misfortune happen to him soon ;

and true enough, at least twenty times such a result has occurred."

"Exactly! For instance, there is an old antediluvian superstition, that the McAlpines must not wear green. It would break the hearts of my clan if they saw me do so. There is no denying that if my purse is green I always lose it; and once, when I ate a green pea, I became ill!"

"Then," answered Lady Anne, laughing, "if it were against the Papal interests for you to wear green, they would persuade you that there was a special judgment on your ever doing so. You must have been in a grass-green coat when you first met Father Eustace!"

"The Highlanders have a superstition, that any one passing a pin on the floor without picking it up, brings down a misfortune on himself; and there are frightful instances told. I suppose the calamity is great in proportion to the size of the pin; but, positively, it is quite tiresome to me when talking with Lady Eaglescairn, for in the midst of our most interesting discussions, when I think her whole attention absorbed in something I am relating, she suddenly dives down, and hurriedly takes one up, laying great stress in her remarks whether the head or the point were turned towards her. How morbidly superstitious we do at last make ourselves by cultivating and promulgating such fancies about either estates or pins."

Long and secretly had Lady Anne, the admired of all admirers, once observed the attachment of Sir Allan to Beatrice, with hopeless sorrow on her own account, as she felt that with the young Chief of McAlpine, her greatest felicity in life might have been found. There was a similarity of tastes and of principles between them that seemed almost inevitably to point out how perfectly they might have been suited; and it was the secret consciousness of Sir Allan's previous attachment which had rendered Lady Anne so ready and anxious, like most other recluses, to give up the world, because the world did not bestow on her exactly what she wished. Some persons, with despairing impatience, throw up the cards at once, when not dealt the best hand, while others build and rebuild their castle in a new school of architecture, with ceaseless good-humour and patience. The mere effort brings its own reward. Lady Anne had from the first despaired of ever finding any reciprocal feelings in the object of her long and deeply cherished preference; but she little guessed that when her beautiful rival in Sir Allan's affections had brought him to the unwilling conviction of her own indifference, she had at the same time made an impression on him never to be erased, by the warm terms of panegyric in which she spoke of Lady Anne herself, and by the belief she had more than hinted, that with her he might yet enjoy every refined and rational felicity.

Sir Allan had, in their long continued hourly intercourse at Heatherbrae, learned more and more to estimate the brilliant accom-

plishments and unaffected gentleness of Lady Anne; but with his increasing estimate of her attractions, there arose a greater and greater diffidence of himself, so that from day to day he postponed a declaration of his sentiments till now, when with glowing eloquence he proceeded frankly to tell Lady Anne the whole history of his own heart, and the conclusion at which he had at last arrived. "Did your quickness never discover my secret?" asked he. "That unworthy as I am to become the happiest of men, I should certainly be the most miserable if you rejected me."

"Do you really think so?" said Lady Anne, at length, with pleasurable nervousness, an arch pretty smile quivering round her mouth, and dimpling her crimson cheek, "I have a great mind to try how wretched you could be made for life, if I accepted you."

"Then pray do, and the sooner you begin to be my torment the better. We must marry in haste, that we may have plenty of leisure to repent! You know that happiness cannot begin too soon, and we must determine that ours shall be perfect. I could attempt any impossibilities now. I am ready to mount the breach on a forlorn hope, or to accept any utterly desperate wager; but I cannot long endure a hopeless love."

"Perhaps," said Lady Anne, colouring deeply and smiling, "your love is not hopeless. Now that Father Eustace has melted away like an evil spirit, when the conjuration is over, we may think and feel as we please."

"Dear Lady Anne," exclaimed Sir Allan, rightly interpreting her agitated manner, "language has not words to express the delight,—or if ecstasy be a more expressive word, the ecstasy of this moment. In the folly of my joy I feel almost inclined to declare that you are a thousand times beyond perfection,—an assemblage of every excellence under the sun, and a great many more."

"I do not quite agree with the last speaker, but the longer you think so the better; and I am quite willing to be convinced, as well as to think as favourably of you in return."

"Then the reciprocity is not all on one side," said Sir Allan, with such a smile of pleasure in his eyes as had not lighted them up since his boyhood. "We can read each other's hearts, and measure our happiness or grief by the degree in which our affections are united in the enjoyments of this life and in the hopes belonging to another and a better. There is no use in my promising to love you, for I cannot help doing so. I am at present quite giddy with standing on the highest pinnacle of happiness. It must be a pleasure to the sun itself being allowed to shine on two such happy people."

"Yes," replied Lady Anne, smiling, "ours will not be a happy valley, but Cairngorum must leave off his clouds and become a mountain of sunshine and happiness."

"It has done so already! My gloomy old towers shall ring again with echoes of human happiness and sounds of grateful

devotion. Their Protestant master shall become a model husband, when united by the dearest link in the chain of human sympathies with his model wife. Believing as I do that there is but one in the world who could make me happy, and that by the greatest good fortune I have secured her, may we not hope that our lives shall be adorned by much of the real poetry of life, and even by a little of its romance, though at the same time built of the most durable materials?

“‘There’s a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are link’d in one heav’nly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.’”—*Moore.*

“Ten years hence, I shall inquire whether your opinion is still the same, and if so, then I shall begin to be vain,” said Lady Anne, striking away a piece of gravel with the point of her parasol. “Yet, Sir Allan, can you and I ever dream of happiness again, after all we have both suffered?”

“Of course we can! I wish all the world were as happy as you and I at this moment! I feel now as if every castle in the air of my former life were becoming realized in solid stone and lime. All that I ask or expect is perfect felicity for the rest of our lives. With me you shall not be able to help feeling happy: I shall hate myself if I cannot make you so. The dark hour of life has passed away from us, and the daylight has dawned. It was truly said that the post of honour is a private station well supported; and such a home as ours shall be a scene of well regulated enjoyment.

“‘Oh to be thus and thus day after day,
To sleep and wake, nor find it yet a dream.’”

“I hope we shall not find the assertion true, that life is at first all poetry, and at last all prose,” said Lady Anne, smiling; “but I remember hearing the beautiful Lady Porchester say of herself lately, ‘I began life with being considered a perfect fairy, and now I end it looking like a perfect witch.’ How will you stand such a change as that in me, for I cannot promise not to grow old and ugly soon,—perhaps even peevish and cross.”

“Well, I would rather be miserable with you than happy with any one else. You will not be so bad, I hope, as Lady Porchester, who beats her Abigail when she is irritated. She was heard lately praising herself as a perfect pattern of conjugal excellence, and ended by saying, ‘Long as Porchester and I have been married, I never yet struck him!’”

“Well, you do not promise yourself too much, I see,” replied Lady Anne, with a look of comic humour. “My faults, and they are many, shall become in your partial eyes like the spots on ermine-fur, the greatest embellishments. We must have a flight of happiness quite beyond the reach of ordinary wings.”

"Now that I am about to 'stand prostrate' at your feet for life, let us have something more than common to boast of," said Sir Allan, breaking into a smile. "We must have a perfect fitch-of-bacon honeymoon; and we must show the world that, having been rescued from a life of deathlike solitude and insane austerities, we can, without any Popish caricature of religion, serve God faithfully, while energetically doing the work of this world, and gratefully enjoying its pleasures, in all the homely simplicity of domestic happiness."

"Apropos of nuns, monks, and solitary cells," exclaimed Lady Anne, eagerly; "it is most unaccountable that for weeks I have watched the tiresome postman in vain, expecting he would bring me a letter from sister Agnes—*ci-devant* Miss Turton. No doubt she would give the ears off her head—the only possession she has left herself—to un-sister-Agnes herself again; but I have written to her incessantly, begging to know if she is endurably comfortable, and got no answer. Can she have changed her mind?"

"You wished to know, I suppose, how Miss Turton prospered, like those who are shivering on the first step of a bathing-machine, and ask those who preceded them if they do not find it cold," replied Sir Allan. "But you know her letters and yours must all be inspected. Miss Turton is now, in every sense but the breath of life, dead. Every tie being relinquished, she must speak even of your long-tryed friendship as passed for ever away: 'I had a friend once: I had wealth; I had books; but now she cannot even have a drawer or box with a key to it. There must be no obstacle to that system of complete *espionage* which might put a detective policeman to shame. I know all, for I have experienced it all.'"

"Still, I should not like that any harm happened to my poor, deceased, well-meaning idiot of a governess," exclaimed Lady Anne, with a look of good-humoured, pretty wilfulness. "We agreed that if she died, a lock of her poor, dear, iron-grey hair should be sent to me. They cannot, surely, have shut up Miss Turton as insane? Odd and absurd as she was, it cannot possibly be come to that! How well I remember that dreadful lunatic cell, the door of which my governess and I laughingly passed some few weeks ago! Really, Sir Allan, though not usually fanciful, I shall be unable to banish from my imagination the picture of that unfortunate Miss Turton, locked up in her solitary cell, tearing her hair—or rather with none to tear, for they shaved her head."

"Have you not often watched a jockey breaking in a horse?" asked Sir Allan, gravely. "It is done by making the animal go round, and round, and round the same weary circle, till he is broken in to a mechanical, unthinking obedience. If he be a fine, high-spirited animal, he is merely condemned to take a few more rounds, and a few severer lashes, but the result is invariably similar. The high-mettled racer, or the dull, plodding hack, are equally broken in to be ridden or driven, as their masters please. So it was with me

My guardian uncle, availing himself of his legal and relative authority, threw the lasso over my neck, and from that day, life's dull round went invariably on without sleep, food, or liberty, while at first I had not the power, and at last not the will to rebel. Thus *'le souffle des hommes éteint ce que le souffle de Dieu a ranimé.'*"

"And you, worthy man, thinking no evil, could not be persuaded to believe in any evil intentions against yourself," added Lady Anne, archly. "I am afraid the next time Father Eustace meets me, now that the fetters he had prepared for us both are shivered to atoms, he will say like Hamlet, 'If thou dost marry, I'll give thee the plague for thy dowry!' Perhaps I may be the greatest plague in life to you."

"I shall take my chance of that, Anne," continued Sir Allan, fervently. "I consider love such as ours the most glorious gift remaining amidst the wreck of human happiness. Father Eustace would have persuaded us that this world's affections are only a snare and a delusion; but we shall consecrate them by a life of diligent and enlightened piety, in which love shall be second to devotion. There are finger posts enough on the path of life to direct us aright, if we do not prefer going on in darkness, and if we do not break our heads against them."

"Allan, with you for a companion, the whole road of life before me seems drenched in sunshine, and strewed with flowers," replied Lady Anne, in a low tone of emotion. "I was blighted by a night-wind, but now the morning sun shines on me, and I am restored."

"Though fortune frown, or falser priest betray,
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still."

"Wear this ring, then, for my sake, Anne: it is the old ring of betrothment in our Highland clan. The diamond is not more pure than my love, nor the gold more lasting and unchangeable. It has been a pledge of wedded felicity to many a successive generation in the house of McAlpine, but never graced the finger of one more deservedly loved than yourself. Give me mutual affection in a cheerful home, and whether that home be a cottage or a palace, if the affection be true and lasting, we need ask of Providence no better earthly blessing."

There are moments of felicity which none can paint, and which few ever enjoy. Such were the hours that followed while Sir Allan traced back with Lady Anne the happy years of his own boyhood, the pleasant days they had enjoyed together on the Continent; and they could even look, though with a sigh of humiliation, on the progress of their perversion to a degrading and miserable superstition—a most unhappy caricature of Christianity—followed by the dawning of that light in the mind of both which had at length restored them to reason and to rational piety.

"I mean to be very ambitious for you," said Lady Anne one day, in reply to a remark of Sir Allan's on the happiness of quiet country life; "you must fill the old family seat in Parliament, to support Protestant principle, and keep the Irish brigade of papists from casting the balance on every question. We want more stirring Scottish members, and you shall be one to attend every division. I already have a clairvoyante glimpse of you, Sir Allan, returning thanks next week on the hustings for a triumphant return, and hear the scraps of your speech almost drowned in tumultuous applause. 'Accustomed to public speaking—deeply flattered—highly delighted—cheap bread—cheap everything—no taxes—Highland home—prosperous tenantry—resident landlord—scenes of my boyhood—no popery—liberty of conscience;'—but, by the way, it is those who talk most of liberty and equality that are invariably the most arbitrary."

"Yes," replied Sir Allan, "if you want the most despotic master on earth to his very few servants, search for the greatest democrat, and you will always find him a petty tyrant. When you hear a papist now, he talks loud and long of religious toleration, though his own imperative duty is to persecute, even to death itself. If I go into Parliament, Anne, it shall be with one object, supreme over all others, to resist the growing influence of Romanists in England. They are all subjects of the Pope, only bound to obey our laws in so far as he allows them to do so, and would upset our institutions and government, if they could, as well as all our domestic happiness. Bitter indeed has been the experience of many in this house on that point. Never, except from necessity, has Rome allowed a Protestant to reign in any country; and now, it is only because her power is gone, but not because her will consents, that Pius the Ninth refrains from tyrannizing in this country, as Gregory the Seventh did once, and so many of his successors, in the zenith of papal authority."

"It is impossible to legislate over men's thoughts and belief in religion any more than over their dreams," observed Lady Anne: "but you and I know now, Sir Allan, from personal experience, what is the code of morals and what are the actions inculcated on the votaries of Rome, and how total an end there would be, under her jurisdiction, to the safety of life and property which every one has so long enjoyed in Scotland."

"True," replied Sir Allan; "look at the denunciations from the altar in Ireland, and the murders that follow. Surely any priest who denounces a man by name from the altar, should be made answerable, if that leads to his being shot over a hedge next day. To constitute in the Romish Church assassination, it is necessary that the deed should be done, as it were professionally, by a hireling employed under contract for the express purpose. The true Italian school of morality is now about to raise its head in Great Britain, as an organized system, acknowledging a different ruler, different

laws, and different penalties from ours, and seeking to divide men from their wives and children, their sons and brothers, their parents, and even their sovereign. With Jesuits such as Father Eustace, the want of natural affection is a virtue; and all their ideas of duty are comprised in blind obedience to an Italian priest. You and I, Anne, were both nearly ensnared; but I feel now that those who value the existence of British institutions, of moral worth, of natural conscience, of human virtue and of human feelings, must unite in Parliament as one man in resisting this onset of Jesuitism in England; or, like a tower undermined, our noble country may seem strong and stately as ever, till her unforeseen downfall involve the inhabitants in one common ruin. May a good Providence watch over us, better than we can watch over ourselves, and avert the shipwreck of our liberty and of our happy homes!—such homes as you and I, Anne, have learned how to value.”

Lord Iona, in the meanwhile, lost not a day in requesting an interview with Lady Edith; he could not trust himself to address Beatrice, feeling, with a delicacy worthy of himself, that a change had taken place in their relative circumstances which forbade him to take advantage of their mutual attachment, until she knew all—until she was fully informed how unjustly his father had withheld from her the estates which were her due, and that he was himself only the bearer of an empty title: it was a title now degraded in his own eyes by crimes for which his honourable mind could see no excuse; and in hurriedly taking every necessary step to undo that guilty work, his feeling of high-minded sorrow on account of his father's degradation obliterated every other pang of regret, with which Lord Iona might have prepared to resign the inheritance which had hitherto seemed inalienably to await him. Beatrice longed to tell her generous-hearted lover, how little she could value any succession which he did not share; and that he who had been so ready to raise her, when portionless and unknown, to his own high position, must now receive from her all that he had been so ready to bestow; but the subject involving as it did a confession of her own long-cherished attachment, and an allusion to his father's long-concealed crime, she felt a shrinking delicacy in even entering his presence alone, or in approaching subjects so strangely interesting as those in which they were both now so deeply concerned.

Not a single concealment from Lady Edith was made by Lord Iona, now Lord Eaglescain, who brought every paper that related in the most distant degree to Beatrice; so that very soon it became evident that every legal proof could be established of her claim to the extensive family estates, and to the old Scottish title of Baroness Clanmarina.

The first step toward asserting her rights, taken by Lady Edith, with the advice and assistance of Lord Iona, was to obtain a legal warrant for the release of Theresa Da Hosta, from her long and dreary imprisonment, in the Convent of St. Ignatia, to which they

at once proceeded together, accompanied by Lady Anne, who wished to avail herself of this pretext and opportunity, to inquire for the newly professed nun, "Sister Agnes."

Accompanied by the Sheriff, Lady Edith and her party, without giving any warning, at once arrived before the gloomy gates, and being mistaken for purchasers come to inspect the bazaar of fancy-work, always kept open by the nuns, they were at once admitted without questions asked.

Great was the change of countenance which took place on the features of the Lady Abbess, *ci-devant* Mrs. Lorraine, who opened her eyes wider than she had ever opened them before, when she perceived who they were who had thus gained such easy access to her presence, and it required all Mrs. Lorraine's practised effrontery calmly to inquire, as she did at length, for what purpose this visit was paid. When Lady Edith's explanation had been given, she at once denied the existence of any such person as her visitors described, and positively maintained that no such individual had ever entered the establishment—that the whole story was an entire, a most absurd, and most unaccountable mistake.

The Sheriff, having briefly explained now his own authoritative position, informed Mrs. Lorraine that if her captive were not immediately produced, he had placed a posse of constables at the door, who possessed power instantly to search the house, and that nothing could prevent their doing so. Upon hearing the Sheriff's announcement of his own office and authority, Mrs. Lorraine visibly changed countenance, and that face, usually cold as marble, became instinct with very visible agitation; yet she once more commanded herself into a tone of perfect repose, when she replied, that the Sheriff had come at an inconvenient hour, that his visits should at all times be unquestionably welcome, as she had nothing to conceal, but that as the nuns were all most particularly engaged at that moment, she begged he would return next day. This request not being acceded to, she suggested that he might remain in the reception room an hour, till the nuns should be disengaged from their devotions; but this also the Sheriff declined, saying, his interview with the imprisoned lady must be immediate, or otherwise the law should take its course—that he regretted there was no legal provision for his making a regular visitation to inspect the Convent, but that on this occasion, an oath having been taken that there was a captive in the Nunnery, unjustly and unwillingly incarcerated, he had no choice but to insist on an immediate personal interview.

"Stay," said Mrs. Lorraine, hastily: "if you mean that wretched maniac, sister Theresa, she is dangerous beyond description. None in this house dare enter her cell!"

"I dare!" replied the Sheriff, in a voice of stern resolution. "Lead the way, Mrs. Lorraine, or let others do so. No earthly power can impede my search now."

The Lady Abbess, hesitatingly, and most unwillingly, advanced

along the dreary echoing passages, which Lady Anne well remembered, and seeing that Mrs. Lorraine, agitated and preoccupied, never once looked round, she silently paused before a door, which belonged, as she knew, to the cell of sister Agnes, and having noiselessly opened it, she gently stole in, and having closed it, glanced anxiously around.

According to her utmost hopes and wishes, Lady Anne found the object of her search, but so changed, that at the first glance she scarcely identified her old governess. Sister Agnes, who did not look round, was seated on her only chair, in an attitude of the deepest despondency, her head resting on her hands, her face colourless, her figure emaciated, her whole expression indicative of languid, hopeless, objectless misery. For several minutes, Lady Anne stood in sad and astonished contemplation of the indescribable alteration in Miss Turton's whole aspect, but some slight movement caused her old friend to look up, with an almost vacant gaze. The next moment, uttering a low suppressed scream of joy, sister Agnes started up from her seat, and rushing into the arms of Lady Anne, burst into an agony of tears, while she exclaimed, in a sobbing hysterical voice, "You are come at last! Oh! how I have almost hopelessly longed to see you once again. I thought there never was to be a joy for me on earth again! But above all joys, Lady Anne, to see you here *alone*! How can that be allowed?"

"It is not permitted. I have stolen this interview," replied Lady Anne with hurried earnestness. "Whatever you have to say, say it quickly. If you wish to tell me anything——"

"Anything! oh, everything! I have worlds to say, Lady Anne. Hours or days could not tell the half;—but, my dear and kind pupil, let my first word be,—even if it were the last I am ever to utter,—this one advice, given to you now from most painful experience,—never, never become the inmate of this Convent. As you value happiness on earth or in heaven, avoid one. As you value truth, delicacy, and real usefulness, do not remain one hour here that you can help. All I told you when writing came short of the dreadful reality. Life is a dreary blank here. In my last letter——"

"Your letter? I received none! It never reached me! Never! You are under the old school girl discipline now, of having your letters read; therefore, from the day you plunged within these dreary hopeless walls, our intercourse has been cut off. Now tell me all, dear Miss Turton. Let nothing be held from one who longs to serve you. You seem all in this house, like those men in the Caliph Vathek's Hall, whose hearts were broiling under black veils."

A long conversation ensued, during which Lady Anne gave Miss Turton a very brief outline of all that had befallen herself since she escaped from the Convent, and extracted from her *ci-derant* governess in return, many revelations of what is withheld from young proselytes, till they have been beguiled into taking the irrevocable vows, from which they become alienated from the natural protection

of parents and relatives. Miss Turton did not hesitate to say that she would give worlds to revoke her solemn oath of allegiance to the Convent, the full meaning and extent of which she had only since learned to measure.

"Tell me, Miss Turton, do you not wish to be released from this den?" asked Lady Anne, in accents of the deepest compassion. "You know me; therefore you know that my mind shall have no rest, nor my eyes a wink of sleep, till steps are taken for your deliverance from a captivity into which you were beguiled by false pretences."

"Dearest Lady Anne! Though I shall come out a beggar, stripped of every hard-earned shilling, gained once laboriously in my long life of teaching, yet obtain, if you can, my mental and bodily freedom, and my jailers shall be welcome to the rest. On my bended knees I should prayerfully return thanks for being restored to the common privileges of humanity. Give me, once more, free as the air of heaven around us, the liberty of thought and action, which I so madly relinquished,—let me no longer be degraded to the rank of a mere animal, obeying the look of a master,—obeying the will of others against my will, and even against my own conscience. But you cannot release me! No, you cannot! The nuns here are all so childish and so obedient, that they are like great big little girls, but I am not yet broke in, and must, therefore, be sent abroad."

"Let no vain alarms agitate you, dear Miss Turton," said Lady Anne, "I have good news to tell you."

"Good news! that would be a rarity to me here."

"Then listen! I make myself answerable that you shall be free before the clock strikes again. No bird in the forest is more at liberty than you shall be to-day. The blue sky shall be over your head, and we shall stroll through the open fields, as in former days together. The Sheriff, who is in this house, will at once deliver you. At dear happy Heatherbrae, how differently from former days, you and I shall speak together of Convent life. There you must tell me all——"

"Not all, Lady Anne—not all!" interrupted Miss Turton, mournfully. "It is not for your ears to hear all the secrets of the confessional. I must draw a very long black veil over some of these. If even their printed books on confession be what they are, what shall be said of their secrets?*" No; my best consolation for all my recent sufferings is, to find this opportunity of warning you, Lady Anne. Be a beggar in the streets, rather than make yourself what I am."

A momentary pause ensued, not a sound was heard, and at length Lady Anne silently took the hand of Miss Turton, and led her towards the door. When they reached it, she said, "We must

* Letter to Lord Shrewsbury, by Pierce Connelly, M.A.

claim your liberty instantly. I trust, dear Miss Turton, that you and I each leave this place a wiser and a better Christian than we entered it. Your experience, like that of the Spartan slaves, must be my best lesson and warning."

Sister Agnes, pale as death, closed her eyes, while her quivering lips refused to articulate a word; but grasping the arm of Lady Anne, with a look of grateful affection, she advanced to meet Mrs. Lorraine, and at once addressing the Sheriff, claimed protection from the law of liberty that is yet paramount in Great Britain—Great as long as it is free.

A week had elapsed, and beside the brightly-glowing fire at Heatherbrae sat a cheerful circle of friends, among whom Lord Iona now looked so gay and animated that sunshine itself seemed dull in comparison. The ladies wore no peculiar dress or uniform, but each was actively and agreeably occupied in works of usefulness, fully intent on discharging, with zeal and fidelity, every duty of charity abroad and of domestic life at home. Even Mrs. Clinton, though pale and drooping with smothering anguish, still endeavoured not to cast a gloom on the rest. Though, in the depth of her depression, no bright smile, as in former days, sparkled in her eyes, and her wan cheek spoke of hope departed and of affections blighted, yet even she did not say, with rebellious discontent, "I will sorrow without ceasing, and I will seek no comfort."

"Ah! why need virtue fear the frowns of fate?
Hers what no wealth can win, nor power create?
A little world of clear and cloudless day,
Not wreck'd by storms, nor moulder'd by decay."

The post arrived,—and who does not hail its approach with pleasure? There is a hopefulness in the human mind that renders the appearance of a letter almost invariably welcome; and from childhood, when the size of the red seal is the measure of its merit, to old age, when many a black one reminds the pilgrim that his friends are preceding him, few ever receive their daily letters without a pleasant anticipation in tearing off the envelope. Lady Edith was the favoured individual to whom the large packet was directed, which McDonald brought in on a salver; and as the old veteran delivered it, he (who had carefully studied the hand-writing of all Lady Edith's correspondents) cast an anxious glance towards Mrs. Clinton diligently reading in a distant corner of the room.

Lady Edith started when she turned to the direction;—she turned to the seal, and it seemed as if every drop of blood in her body glowed in her face with surprise;—she opened the letter, and rushed through page after page of closely-written manuscript, till at length having reached the end she heaved a deep sigh, not of sorrow but of infinite thankfulness. Large tears quivered in the eyes of Lady Edith Tremorne, when she rose from her seat, walked across the room, and kindly laying her hand on Mrs. Clinton's

shoulder, looked in her pallid face, saying, in accents of very solemn congratulation, "My dear friend, do you remember what our favourite poet says—'The wretch of to-day may be happy to-morrow'? You have borne the greatest weight of sorrow that your spirit could endure and live. Can you bear an equal weight of joy?"

Mrs. Clinton observing that the hand-writing was her husband's, almost shrieked with hysterical excitement, started from her seat in an agony of suspense, snatched the letter from Lady Edith's hands, tremblingly glanced over the first few lines, and, in a state of almost insane felicity, fainted in the arms of Beatrice. Soon after her restoration to consciousness, Mrs. Clinton felt as if it were a dream from which she never could wish to awake, as her husband's arms were around her, and the two boys were clinging to her side. Yes; the happy wife was a wife still, and the happy mother was still a mother. Her very heart seemed breaking with joy. She leaned her forehead on the shoulder of Mr. Clinton, and they wept together. No questions were asked—not a word could yet be uttered on either side; but it was enough!—he had returned and what more could she desire!

Mr. Clinton was a worn and altered man. Deep thought and anxious care were marked indelibly on his emaciated countenance; but there was a clear intelligence in his eyes, now looking full at those around him, very different from the practised downcast, lacklustre aspect which they had of late assumed. He spoke also in a natural tone,—not measured, slow, and sententious, as his recent manner had been; and he seemed to have recovered the free use of his limbs, which were kept in rigid Pre-Raphaelite attitudes. The very hair on his head had lost its Popish tendency, and had escaped being tonsured.

"Mr. Clinton," said Lady Edith, after some time given to all the incoherences of a joyful surprise, and frankly extending her hand to him, "You look like a Protestant again—and you are one?"

"Yes; God be praised, I am!—more than ever—heart and soul. Oh, how I long to tell you my history! Fiction itself may hide her diminished head beside the truths that I must relate to all who have loved me, and mourned for me as dead. How narrowly I have escaped committing a moral suicide; and how little do I deserve this too kind welcome home. Home! how many blessings it comprises, which I, deluded mortal, was about to abandon for ever!"

There were prayers that night at Heatherbrae, conducted by Mr. Clinton, with an intensity of devotion not to be described; while, with sobs and tears of unutterable joy, Mrs. Clinton knelt between her two boys, and in low, earnest accents fervently re-echoed every word as it was spoken, of thankfulness and praise—of faith, hope, and universal charity.

"At the instigation of Father Eustace, I had snapped asunder every chain that binds the heart of one human being to another

and become a perfect fakir in austerities. I left myself no tie but that of headlong obedience to my confessor himself," observed Mr. Clinton, thoughtfully, while his affectionate wife, with tearful ecstasy, clasped his arm, and his boys elung fondly to his knee. "But when I discovered the use that was to be made of this spiritual despotism,—to defend what was absolutely sinful,—to make the darkest crime seem bright, if committed under the colour of obedience,—when falsehood was to be enjoined for the promotion of any Popish object,—and when truth was to be contemptuously set aside, if it interfered with those Popish interests which I was bound hand and foot to promote,—then, feeling myself called upon to become 'a conscious partaker in undoubted sin,'* the nightmare of superstition became so fearful that I started wide awake at once, and escaped for my very life."

"It is the mystery of mysteries to me that there can be found any one, with human intellect and human feelings, who so mistakes the character of his Creator, and the purposes for which he was made, as to become a Jesuit," observed Lady Edith, meditatively. "I could wonder all day, and lie awake to wonder all night again, that any mortal can read the works of Alphonso Liguori without both horror and contempt."

"He proclaims a certainty of salvation to any proselyte who shall blindly obey any one Papal priest—Father Eustace, for instance,—and the smallest doubt of his commands being right becomes a guilty mistrust," observed Mr. Clinton thoughtfully. "When my two churchwardens demanded whether I had finally abandoned the Protestant faith, Father Eustace whispered to me that I must answer in these words, 'I say, no.' He maintained that this merely meant that I said the word 'No.' He observed that this was a lawful equivocation; though, should these words not satisfy my questioners, I must confirm the equivocation with an oath. He added, 'You are not thus deceiving your churchwardens; but, for a good and sufficient reason, letting them deceive themselves.'"

"Father Eustace considers truth to be quite as dangerous to society as falsehood," observed Mrs. Clinton, "and makes no distinction between them. When I one day implored him to tell me whether you had not entered the Monastery at Inverness, he answered, 'I know nothing about it.' That meant, it appears, 'I know nothing about it proper to be mentioned.'"

"I should have told Father Eustace, pell mell, my whole opinion of such conduct—such utter violation of truth, which is as much broken by an evasion as by a downright falsehood,"—exclaimed Lord Iona. "My indignation, like Bob Acres' courage, would have oozed out at my finger-ends. Did you not do the indignant on such an occasion?"

"No; these evasions are merely what Father Eustace and Co.

* Connelly's Letter to Lord Shrewsbury, p. 7.

consider making the best of a bad business," answered Mr. Clinton, "and very bad indeed the best is. He has a degree of diplomatic skill which Talleyrand might envy, and manages that all the strange legends or stories he tells shall become burned, like enamel, into the inmost depths of the imagination—inventions which Milton characterises as—

"'Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceived.'"

CHAPTER XLV.

"The God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father and the world our home."

COWPER.

It was a day of glorious sunshine at Heatherbrae,—the garden a rainbow of flowers, light shadows chasing each other across the mountain side, the cattle all looking as if grouped by Cuyper himself, and the noisy river roaring like a cataract along its rocky bed. All was joyous in nature; the salmon shooting along the stream, the birds hovering merrily overhead, and the cattle enjoying their daisied pasture. Beatrice stood at the gorge of a beautiful highland glen, looking down upon the scattered village of Clanmarina for the first time since it had become in part her own, and a glow of heartfelt interest spread like sunshine over her happy spirit, when she thought that the prosperous felicity which appeared so bright and smiling in the Protestant half of the little hamlet, might soon be extended to the Eaglescairn tenantry. Perhaps the glow on her cheek became deeper when telling herself that in all her pleasant anticipations of future usefulness, she might hope for the cheerful sympathy and energetic assistance of one whose apparently heedless vivacity concealed without diminishing the warmth of a heart and the brightness of an intellect which Beatrice thought had no equal.

She seated herself, looking like one of Gainsborough's most beautiful portraits, on a mossy bank, carpeted with wild primroses and blue-bells, to admire at leisure the grand old oak-trees overhanging and almost meeting across the river, while she silently wondered to notice on how little nourishment they had managed for centuries to survive, clasping the bare rocks with roots and fibres, but scarcely in a single instance reaching the earth. "So," thought Beatrice, "did my hopes, that had nothing to rest on, always increase and grow freshly from day to day, that sooner or later my story should be unravelled! It has at last come out,—oh! how melancholy! and in bestowing my long-hoarded affections now entirely on my

cousin, Lord Eaglescain, I reward his disinterested preference and secure my own felicity. It is a great privilege, no longer to conceal from him the extent and depth of my attachment, for long have I felt and known that it could end only with my life, and that during life it would be my greatest earthly delight,—not to the exclusion of better hopes, but to their truest security.”

The pure and innocent thoughts of Beatrice were so occupied in building up her own little fabric of future blessings to be bestowed on those around, and to be enjoyed with grateful devotion herself, that she did not observe the rustling sound of a light footstep on the turf, till suddenly, with a look of almost breathless pleasure and surprise, Lord Eaglescain stood before her, and in accents of tenderness, such as no voice but his own could have expressed, he exclaimed, “Beatrice! yes! Fortunate man that I am to have found at once what I was hastening in search of,—Lady Clanmarina!”

The young face of Beatrice had already been drenched in blushes, and lighted up with a smile at the unexpected appearance of her lover, but deeper and deeper still became the scarlet on her cheek, when she said, in a low quivering voice, “That name is one I never mean to assume,—never, unless you oblige me to do so.”

“No!” exclaimed Lord Eaglescain, seating himself on the turf by her side, and looking at the glowing countenance of Beatrice with an expression of tender earnestness. “The title is yours without dispute——”

“When I had no name, you offered me one,” said Beatrice, with generous frankness. “Are you too proud now, to let me shield your father’s name from dishonour by never letting the circumstance of my succession be known? To you let me still remain Beatrice, and for the world, let them never know the freak of fortune that has occurred to us. It is sufficient that they should know I am proved to be a De Bathe, the grand-daughter of your father’s predecessor. It matters not to any one now what succession I gain, or how it was delayed. If our happiness is to depend on each other, as you have long most disinterestedly wished, then your father’s good name becomes no less dear to myself than to you, and I can show my sense of his repentance and of his desire to make me all the compensation he could, when he planned bestowing on me,—somebody that he thought it just possible I might be happy with.”

If ever man’s love were totally untarnished by worldly interest it was Lord Eaglescain’s, who now, with all the fervour of impassioned eloquence, poured out his whole feelings to Beatrice, in a burst of grateful emotion; and perhaps there never were two happier hours spent in this world, than those during which the two young lovers entered into mutual explanations, rallied each other with sportive humour, recriminated in jest, spoke sense and sentiment, wisdom and nonsense, planned schemes of happiness for the future, laughed till they were in tears over old recollections, and discussed as they at length strolled slowly and unwillingly homewards to dinner, many

a hope of living long in a too-happy-for-this-world state of mutual confidence to each other, and of unwearying benevolence to all around.

"To me," said Lord Eaglescairn, "ever since I knew you, there have been but two places in the world,—where you are and where you are not! If a heart entirely your own is worth having, mine has already bestowed on you attachment enough for a dozen of ordinary lovers."

"And I know how to value it," said Beatrice, in a low tone of deep emotion. "My future life shall prove that! Think what a change to me, since I thought it a duty to extinguish every hope for myself or others,—when I believed myself a waif and stray belonging to nobody! Even then your generous nature would have overlooked all, except your own too partial estimate of me."

"My spirits are soaring to-day like a balloon on a sunbeam! I am quite in a blaze of felicity to see every wish of my heart realized, and I deserve it, for hope has always been with me a perfect air plant that flourished upon nothing," said Lord Eaglescairn, in a tone of animated sensibility that became him well. "But it almost ceased to exist weeks ago, when my ardent love taught me to feel how undeserving I was, that such a heart as yours could ever be mine. Now, poor as the youngest of younger sons, how much less right had I to hope than ever!"

"You do not, of course, allow a single momentary thought to dwell on the disparity that either was or is between us in fortune," said Beatrice, colouring deeply. "You told me, when I was a nameless foundling, that you were ready to live, starve, or die, for me, had your father then disinherited you! therefore, now that other circumstances have, as it were, again disinherited you, my happiness is, to feel how very generous an attachment it is in my power to return."

"To return and to reward. Great is my reward, indeed, Beatrice," said Lord Eaglescairn, while tears actually started into his eyes, and he turned away for some moments, unable to speak from emotion. "If I know nothing else, I know my own demerits; but I know also that my attachment to yourself is deep and strong as any earthly feeling can be, therefore my heart's desire is, to become all that you wish me."

"And mine to become all that you think me, and more," said Beatrice, in a tone of charming sensibility, as she glanced at the handsome countenance of her lover, lighted up with joy. "I wish you thought less of me, that you may never be disappointed."

"Impossible! Trust me for knowing that I have found the Koh-i-noor diamond among ladies; the *rosa speciosissima* and *grandiosa*! but think what I have suffered lest another be preferred to myself!" interrupted Lord Eaglescairn. "I know my own good fortune, but can I ever be worthy of gaining such a prize! I sink into despondency when considering what the man should be who gains your

affection. How shall I characterise one who can recommend himself only by his devoted attachment!"

"There have been all sorts of Lord Eaglescairns in their day, with suitable appellations," said Beatrice, gracefully leaning on the arm of her happy lover. "He who is now discovered to have been my grandfather, was 'The Proud Lord,'—then there was 'The Priest-ridden Lord,' and 'The Extravagant Lord.' What sobriquet do you mean to deserve?"

"I ought to be 'The Landless Lord,' my whole property now being picturesquely situated in the moon; but I can think of no name for myself at this moment but 'The Happy Lord Eaglescairn!'" replied he, clasping the hand of Beatrice in his own, and resuming his wonted tone of vivacity. "The greatest novelty in our family would certainly be, to hear myself called 'The Protestant Lord Eaglescairn!' During how many generations we have been the slaves of Rome,—ever since the time of James II., when the name of a priest and a plotter were synonymous, and when the whole moral law was contained in the Pope's pocket, and in the coffers of his treasury. I have often lately thought of Petrarch's words, who, being in the Pope's household, fled from it as from a city of destruction, saying, 'I know by experience that there is here no piety, no charity, no faith, no reverence of God, no fear; that there are here no holy, just, or upright men; that there is no care or seriousness; nothing, in short, even human. Love, shame, propriety, candour are banished thence. I say nothing of truth, for what place is there for truth, where all is full of falsehood,—the sacred recesses of the temples, the tribunals of the judges, the seat of the pontiffs,—in fine, the mouths, the nods, the gestures, the voices, the countenances, the minds of men, are all false and counterfeit.' It is from being the besotted advocate of Rome, with all her absurdities, her idolatries, her errors, and her abominations, that, like Petrarch, I have been delivered. On such quicksands I might have been building through life, but for the open criminality that disgusted me in Father Eustace, and the beautiful exemplification of Christian excellence that I witnessed at Heatherbrae."

Tears of pleasure started into the beautiful eyes of Beatrice, as with smiling timidity she gave a short glance of intense pleasure to her companion; but she felt unwilling or unable to speak, and he continued—

"I found lately in my father's library an old tract called 'New Shreds of the Old Snare,' and the snare is not worn out yet! Father Eustace would have forced me to believe everything, and drove me for a time into believing nothing. When he saw my inquiring mind stuck on the horns of a dilemma, he tried to make me swallow it, horns and all, but that was impossible. I could not accommodate my mind to his elastic code of morals, which consists entirely in becoming an automaton, growing blinder every hour, with no idea but to serve Rome in a course of small morality, of cheap absolu-

tions, and of idle empty mechanical ceremonies. Accustomed to take from us the holy liberty of the mind, Father Eustace aims only at the destruction of the body and the despotic guidance of the soul. From such a dissolution of myself and inward annihilation, I am preserved, and from continuing in a church which is as Genebrand once said, 'not apostolical, but apostate-ical.'"

"The Popish superstition certainly is a grand falsehood, full of chimerical promises, and many of its fables are like the reverie of an opium-eater; as it affords a home to every exaggeration of fanaticism, idolatry, guilt, and superstition," replied Beatrice, earnestly. "With its ever-growing creed and old Pagan ceremonials, those who become once shrouded in the delusions of Rome are merely to obey, but not to understand, any more than the child who holds a shell to his ear and fancies he knows what it says. The object of a Popish, as of a heathen priest, is to conceal mysteries, not to explain them, and to disunite religion from morals. Romish principles are as out of place in an English drawing-room, as an Italian organ-boy would be in a palace."

"Sir Allan pointed out to me yesterday what an eminent author says, and what I am sure our own recent observation may confirm, that Popery is 'a monstrous compound of secret fraud and force—of hypocrisies and villanies of all sorts and degrees—of monks, friars, cardinals, kings, and popes—of hypocrites of every class, and villains of every grade, all banded together to defy God and ruin man," said Lord Iona solemnly. "How deeply thankful McAlpine feels, and ought to feel, for being delivered from that strange delusion which had really rendered him as intellectually tipsy with mental excitement as opium makes its victims."

"It was a wonderful escape from the fangs of an uncle, who, being Sir Allan's confessor, knew him better than he knows himself!" said Beatrice. "A priest such as Father Ambrose, who understands every secret weakness or folly, may even cringe before his victim, but must secretly despise him, for relinquishing all that makes man a man in dignity and worth, but these delusions strike root in imaginative minds, and are not to be reached by reason or argument."

"Now," continued Beatrice, cheerfully, yet with a shy agitated blush, "the horizon of life, lately all gloom to so many in this house, is enlivened by a very bright rainbow of hope. Sir Allan and Lady Anne have a perfect wealth of felicity themselves, with a long vista before them of future happiness, all snatched back from the gulf of Romanism, into which their best feelings were about to be frozen; and we ourselves, who were in some little danger, shall not now be very miserable."

"Not very, unless a state of unimaginable happiness and of super-felicity can make me so. To me the future seems almost as vividly present as the past, and nothing in life could appear even a trial to me, if we double all our joys and share all our sorrows

together. I shall live all my life as if there were not another being on the earth to be loved but yourself. Death itself cannot separate us now. Few make the most of their materials for enjoyment, but ours, Beatrice—my own Beatrice now—shall be the very quintessence of domestic felicity, distilled over a fire of sound principle and energetic usefulness. The only drawback in the biography of our hearts now united into one will be, that our time shall pass too swiftly. I have a vision like Alnaschar of unearthly felicity, to be realized with you as my much-loved companion, when days shall seem like moments, and moments acquire the value of ages."

More than an hour elapsed,—if the truth must be told, more than two,—during which Beatrice and Lord Eaglescain continued a conversation which varied like a tessellated pavement from grave to gay, while in the exercise of intellect, thought, and conscience they felt how great is the bounty of God to man, in gifting him with so many sources of blameless enjoyment. "I have waited, suffered, hoped and feared for a perfect age," said Lord Eaglescain, "while desiring to secure your companionship along the road of life, my Beatrice, now to be hedged in with every domestic blessing, under the sanction of our own Creator and of His holy word, to be our daily study hereafter together."

"Social in essence is the Christian God;
Social in life the scene our Saviour trod;
And selfish chains contract the mind
That should encircle human kind."—*R. Montgomery.*

CHAPTER XLVI.

"Our life is all chequer'd with pleasures and woes,
That chase one another like waves of the deep."—*MOORE.*

POOR Bessie McRonalD, broken in heart as in health, might often now be seen under the old oak-tree, where formerly she had read so many of Mrs. Lorraine's bewildering books, but now one only volume was the subject of her heartfelt and most reverential study—need it be said this volume was the Holy Word of God. All day she worked diligently in her widowed step-mother's nursery and dairy, as well as among the bees, the flowers, and the poultry, but the dawn of every morning and the twilight of evening saw her quietly seated in profound attention over the revered lesson, often with tears blistering the pages before her, but always, with a serious earnest countenance, attending to the great revelation of God to each created mortal. Every day at a distance, had Bessie only looked up, a fitting form might have been observed hovering among the trees, and anxiously, with melancholy but unalterable interest,

gazing towards the spot where she sat. Robert Carre and Bessie by tacit mutual consent never met, but obviously avoided each other, yet their thoughts were always together. Though dressed in the deepest mourning for his father, and with mourning yet deeper in his handsome countenance, he seemed unable to tear himself away from that corner of the hay-field whence he could see his once-loved Bessie, though painfully uncertain how far her restoration to right principles might be permanently depended on; and many an hour, when she felt alone in the world, desolate and forlorn, one eye watched over her with ceaseless interest, and one heart beat with yet ardent attachment for her, and for her only.

The young girl had remained out unusually late one night, and being obliged on her way home to pass by the Popish chapel, beside which many exciting placards were put up, she observed that to the list always fastened on that door of those denounced by Father Eustace, among whom Lady Edith had long figured as one, the name of Robert Carre had been lately added in peculiarly conspicuous characters of red ink. Bessie was about to hurry on, anxiously escaping every recollection connected with the confessor and his machinations, when the sound of a voice reached her—a voice only too familiar to her ears—and in stopping to ascertain whence it proceeded, she heard the slow pompous tone of Father Eustace addressing a numerous party of nearly an hundred ragged Donnybrook-Fair-looking Irishmen, who had come to Clanmarina professedly as reapers, and they were joined by a moderate sprinkling of one or two Clanmarina Papists of the lowest rank.

“Do not strike, but if heretics are struck it is not my fault, nor any man’s fault,” said Father Eustace impressively. “Remember in particular that bloody-minded heretic Robert Carre, who attacked me yesterday. I do not desire you to burn his stack-yard to the ground, but were it done what would be the harm? If he were in the fire himself, so much the better, though I do not bid you burn him. If his house be consumed with all the inhabitants, who can blame me? At the same time should such an event happen to-night, let those who know anything of the accident call upon me to-morrow. I have absolved many worse sins, if that be a sin; I should rather say it is a merit to rid the world of those who deserve to be driven from it. I shall look out of my window at twelve o’clock to-night, and if there should be a red light towards Daisybank, all I can say is that the misfortune cannot be my doing, though it may be the work of good men and true. What do you all stand there for, staring about like astonished cassowaries, with your hands in your pockets, waiting to have your throats cut by that persecuting crew of Protestants at Heatherbrae! Be alive! Stand up for your rights! Let there be freedom or death; and if one of you dare to vote for Sir Allan, now that he is a bloody-minded apostate, you may christen and bury yourselves, but no priest in Scotland shall do renegades any such offices of religion. Those who disobey me

shall be cut off from the living, and not make their graves with the dead. Now, three groans for the Lady of Heatherbrae, and three curses for Robert Carre of Daisybank."

The sensation was immense, and Bessie trembled as she heard the muttered thunder of fifty or an hundred angrily excited voices calling down vengeance on the benefactress of Clanmarina, and on her own dearest of earthly friends and favourites, her once affianced husband, Robert Carre. It was a terrifying sound, and the agitated girl, at a loss what to do, shrunk into her own home, where, seated at the window, she endeavoured to collect her thoughts, and to decide on the best mode of acting. The evening had become nearly dark, and no one was at hand whom she could send to warn either Lady Edith or Robert Carre of the unexpected excitement suddenly raised in the Popish quarter of Clanmarina by the announcement of Father Eustace, that Sir Allan had become an apostate from the Popish faith, and that a new candidate, Mr. O'Grady, a straight-from Tipperary Irish Papist, was invited to stand for the vacant seat in parliament. He was brought across the sea by Father Eustace himself, who ended his public address that night by saying—"Let us have freedom of election or perish in its defence! If a man amongst you presumes to vote for Sir Allan, he must take the fatal consequences and shall repent it, the latest hour he has to breathe. Down with the heretic nests at Heatherbrae and Daisybank, or else down with your own lives and property. I do not bid you make a riot to-night, but if you go home like cowards in peace, my blessing shall not go along with one of you."

Bessie had not been above a few minutes in her mother's cottage, before she heard the sound of muffled voices and the trampling of many feet, passing under her window in the direction of Daisybank, and looking out, she saw a tumultuous mob of men and women carrying torches, sticks, flails, pokers, scythes, pitchforks, and reapers' hooks in the direction of Daisybank. Their faces, as they moved past, looked pale and resolute, and a silent determination appeared in their onward progress appalling to witness. Father Eustace walked some part of the way at their head, evidently taking the command, but immediately opposite to where Bessie sat he paused, saying—"Now, my brave fellows! Do no mischief—not that any one could call it mischief to burn the property of a heretic, or even to burn himself. O'Hara and Feeny, mark my words! I will have no hand in any violence. You had much better all disperse and go home, but if you are determined to fight in the cause of your liberty and religion, the shortest road to Daisybank is through this gate and over that stile, keeping to the left."

Father Eustace moved solemnly away, in an opposite direction, and disappeared slowly in the surrounding darkness, while the mob advanced headed by Pat McDermot, with a suppressed sound of steps and voices, in the direction indicated by the priest, who paused at a distance to watch them, and the tyrant dressed in sable canoni-

eals, angrily shook his fist at one or two lingering behind as if about to turn back.

The rioters had evidently a watchword among them, and their leader who drove and dragooned them forwards was armed with a large sledge-hammer of enormous weight, which he flourished menacingly over his head.

Swifter than wind were the steps with which Bessie, wrapped closely round in her scarf of the McAlpine tartan, now fled along the more circuitous route that led through some corn-fields to the dwelling of her endangered friends. The shutters were all closed at Daisybank, and Robert Carre, with his household assembled, was conducting the evening prayers, when a loud knock of startling vehemence at the outer door was followed by a furious ringing of the bell, which ceased not till Robert Carre opened it, and Bessie, almost fainting with terror, stumbled into the house, and breathlessly related all she had heard, or seen, or even imagined.

Scarcely had the swift-footed girl begun to explain her errand, before Robert from her incoherent expressions at once understood the whole purport of her warning, and with the most perfect calmness took instant and vigorous measures to protect his life and property. Accompanied by his cousin Andrew, his dog Ponto, and the farm servants, he formed a regular patrol round the extensive stack-yard of Daisybank, and when the angry mob arrived, expecting to surprise a sleeping foe, they found young Carre not only wide awake, but also armed at all points to the teeth. Not a vulnerable spot was to be found on the premises of Daisybank, and the midnight conspirators having no authoritative priest to urge them on, and being somewhat intimidated by the firing of three guns in the air, "merely," as Andrew said, "*a feu de joie* to welcome them, the whole Popish malecontents dispersed at once, more quietly than they met. When Robert Carre returned home glowing with gratitude to Bessie for her timely warning, and delighted at this opportunity once more to see her, she had vanished. As rapidly as she came, the melancholy and heart-stricken girl retraced her footsteps when she had given the alarm; unable to bear the idea of deliberately meeting her lover under such altered circumstances, and most unwilling in any way or on any account to thrust herself upon his notice. When safely housed again, she rushed hurriedly into the very small room which she could call her own, bolted the door, and throwing herself on the bed, she clasped her hands over her eyes and burst into a passion of tears. They were not, as formerly, tears that scorched and burned up her soul, but a feeling of devout thankfulness pervaded her mind, that she had lived to serve Robert Carre, and that consciousness softened the harshness of all her previous sorrow, giving verdure and freshness to her agitated spirit. Yes, she had seen Robert once again, she had spoken to him, she had received his warm-hearted thanks before he hurried out to defend his farm-yard, she had caught his eye upon her with a look

presence of attacking mobs

of kindness, she had felt the pressure of his hand in grateful acknowledgment of her services, and Bessie now thought that she could die happy, that she could die reconciled to herself, because reconciled to him.

Next day the election was to take place, and both sides promised themselves a small majority, so that the interest excited on both sides was keen beyond example. At the first peep of morning, Father Eustace was inspecting the hustings, which were reared through his secret influence on that part of the village belonging to Lord Eaglescairn, and he peremptorily placed in the hand of each voter a card, with the name of Mr. O'Grady on it, for whom he made them swear to vote. Several priests had been brought over from Ireland by the new Irish candidate to assist in his canvas, and a most animated scene of Hibernian disorder it was. Father Eustace seemed everywhere at once, and nowhere long, while his Irish brethren were quite at home in such scenes. At one time he stood in a cart adorned with green boughs and lilacs, bringing in headlong a waggon-load of voters, some tied in pairs to prevent escape,—at another place Father Eustace was pursuing a refractory constituent over hedge and ditch, to force him into giving his free and independent vote for Mr. O'Grady. One poor man, McTavish,* who had two of his children in Lady Edith's school, and was himself, though a good man, not a good Papist, had discovered that his Christian name in the list of voters was registered wrong,—David instead of Duncan he had been called,—therefore he rather gladly declined to take the necessary oath; but Father Eustace, not to be conquered by a trifling difficulty, took the poor man to an ale-house, where he was unwillingly re-baptized by priest O'Connell, who assured him that this ought to satisfy the most unruly conscience; nevertheless still the unwilling recruit demurred. "You ungrateful renegade!" said Father Eustace; collaring his captive at last, and dragging him towards the poll. "Duncan McTavish! vote; or be destroyed body and soul. Brute! will you not hear your own priest?† Did I not bury your wife for you, ungrateful idiot as you are, and took not above £10 for my dues?"

"I'll bury the next myself," replied Duncan, sulkily: "but I cannot vote to-day. I tied off the other night with Donald McAlpine. Though he has broke his leg since, and can't attend, still a promise is a promise."

"Not if I absolve you from it," said Father Eustace; "in that case it is no more binding than a rotten straw."

"Ah!" said one of O'Grady's supporters, tipping a knowing wink to Father Eustace, "I saw Donald brought to the hustings on a shutter this minute, he gave his whole and entire vote for Sir Allan!"

* *Times* newspaper, 31st July, 1852.

† *Times*.

"The rascal; I'll do for him!" exclaimed Duncan, in high excitement, "his whole and entire vote indeed! But my whole and entire vote shall go contrary to his, therefore small profit he'll get by his shameful trick. Little did I expect it of Donald."

"Ah! these Protestants will do anything, so they can only take our freedom of election from us," answered Mr. O'Grady's champion, forcibly hurrying the enraged Duncan straight to the poll. "Now vote like a man,—and like a good man too."

"Hallo, McTavish!" exclaimed Andrew Carre, "so you are going to break faith with us. Poor Donald McAlpine died yesterday morning to be sure, but——"

"Died!" exclaimed Duncan, staggering back before he had pledged himself, aghast with consternation. "If the O'Gradies have deceived me on purpose, they shall pay for it. I'd vote for the Grand Turk himself but I'd vote for any reverend deceivers that would cheat me by a falsehood."

"Beware what you say!" exclaimed Father Eustace, in a voice of thunder, "you shall be a marked man for life,—or rather for death,—if you do not instantly support the cause of liberty, by recording your vote. I shall put up your name on the chapel door, I shall denounce you at the altar, I shall forbid you to enter the church, I shall refuse to baptize your child, I shall have the seat in chapel torn up where you sit, I shall let you be buried like a dog, I shall——"

Duncan McTavish became pale as a corpse, and grasped hold of a pillar for support; his lips quivered, his knees smote against each other, and the hand visibly trembled in which he held his stick. Father Eustace seeing his advantage, raised his hand as if about to pronounce a fearful malediction on the wavering and terrified culprit, when a sudden shout attracted the attention of both priest and voter, the street became suddenly filled with a roaring and yelling multitude, urged on by the Irish brigade of priests belonging to Mr. O'Grady, and before Father Eustace could look round again for his prisoner, Duncan McTavish had sprung down the steps of the hustings and disappeared. The next moment he found himself within the door of that mournful house in which he then discovered his old friend Donald McAlpine stretched out for interment, having died early on the previous day.

The shouting mob which advanced, consisted of a pell-mell gathering of the lowest rabble from the Popish quarter of Clan-marina, dressed like Falstaff's ragged regiment, in most picturesque tatters, and even more undisciplined than that celebrated corps. They had banded themselves together in a furious onset against the recently bereaved Robert Carre, who was slowly and firmly walking up the street, clothed in deep mourning, to record his vote for Sir Allan, amidst a storm of hisses and execrations: his countenance alone was calm, his step deliberate, and his eye mild

but solemn in its expression, as he looked mournfully around on the tumultuous mob, whose violence at length brought him to a complete stand-still.

"My friends and neighbours," he said in a voice more of pity than of anger, "be rational in your conduct. There are no animals but geese and serpents that hiss. If you have anything reasonable to say, let me hear it. I am but going to exercise the birthright of a Scotchman; I am going to give my vote for the Chief of McAlpine, the successor of our good Sir Evan, the man that seems best fitted to maintain our laws, our real liberty, and our religion——"

"Down with tyrants! down with oppressors! O'Grady and freedom of election for ever! keep him off the hustings!" shouted an Irish priest. "Hold him back; away with the heretic! Do not strike, but he who lets that man vote, is no friend to liberty; Pat, stand on the steps there! Let nobody ^g up without my signal. We must defend our freedom——"

Robert meanwhile resolutely advanced, his tall figure, calm demeanour, and invincible air, giving him an irresistible command, while the active use he had occasion to make of his arms in pushing aside the myriads of his opponents, gave to young Carre's progressive motion the look of a person swimming through the crowd, while opposed by a very tumultuous sea through which to buffet his way forwards.

Father Eustace stood at the top of the steps, and Father O'Connell at the bottom, so that the fortress of the hustings seemed impregnable; but young Carre suddenly darted forwards to one of the pillars, swung himself like a sailor up to the platform, and before any new violence could be perpetrated on him, in spite of priest or mob, hooting or yelling, recorded his vote. Andrew Carre then with a loud cheer threw his hat in the air, exclaiming, "Hurrah! our majority is ten, and the poll closes in an hour. Hurrah for the Chief! Hurrah for McAlpine!"

Robert made his cousin an imperative sign to be silent, for this was no time when any friend of humanity or of liberty could desire to increase the excitement in an almost delirious mob, as ignorant of religion or politics as the people of Timbuctoo, and already dangerously infuriated; but the priests thought differently, for it was evident that they aimed at having young Carre both bludgeoned and stoned. The young farmer's forbearance was mistaken for fear or indecision, so that the Irish reapers, becoming more outrageous, seized on every missile they could find, and hurled it at the two Carres, who stood side by side, pale, but firm, while they plainly perceived how the priests were hounding on the mob to their destruction. No one dared now to be neutral, and the hustings looked like a beleaguered fortress.

"Remember!" said Father O'Connell, whirling his whip, while he stood beside a car of imprisoned voters; "remember the bloody-minded attack yesterday on Father Eustace, whose life was saved

only by his own courage and presence of mind! Lady Edith looking on too, and Sir Allan assisting. Observe those two black sheep on the hustings! They headed a mob yesterday that would have murdered your priest. What do they deserve now? Cowardly wretches! if you let them escape, the guilt be upon your own heads,—I'll never absolve one of you more! Duncan McTavish! so they've caught you again! Tied in a cart, there, neck and heels, how do you feel? Come and vote instantly, like a free and independent freeholder as you are, or take the consequences.* Suppose the hand of death heavy upon you to-morrow, and that a messenger comes to me to attend you in your dying moments. If there were no other priest in the way, I would be bound to go. I dare not refuse to attend the death-bed of such a being. (Great sensation.) I would go to attend such a wretch with a heavy heart, without much hope, because I would feel that I was going to administer sacraments to one whose conscience had become so seared, and whose heart was so rotten at the core, that I could not have much expectation of effecting a conversion. Overpowered with the impression that I was about to visit a perjured wretch, who, for a miserable bribe, had betrayed the dearest interests of his country and his religion, and borne down with the harrowing reflection that God, in his just anger, might leave such a wretch to die in his sins, (sensation,) I should fear that my mission would be fruitless—that I could have no hope of converting a heart so hardened, so lost to every sense of duty and religion, as to vote in favour of that apostate traitor, Sir Allan. Keep from him and his supporters, for the devils of hell are his companions, and no saint in heaven shall pray for him in his dying hour."

Duncan McTavish, completely overpowered by such a burst of imprecations poured out on his special account, was lifted from the cart and borne up to the hustings again, trembling and bewildered, but still evidently most unwilling to record his newly acquired name as voting at all, and shrank back in agonized perplexity when the pen was thrust into his hand.

"Duncan McTavish," said Robert Carre, with grave anxiety, "consult nothing but your own conscience now, and be perfectly free to exercise your own right. He is the free man whom the truth makes free. If it cost me my life this moment, I'll stand by you, rather than see any man forced to vote when I know his conscience bids him not, and when I see you urged into breaking your own solemn promise to the unburied dead."

"See him tampering with an elector," exclaimed Father O'Connell, in a voice of thunder, "the battle is at our doors, now. Up, brothers! (deafening cheers.) What occurred to your unoffending and defenceless pastor yesterday, may be attempted by other means to-morrow. He had nearly been slaughtered in the sham

* *Times*, 28th July, 1852.

bles of Protestant butchery. Law and justice slept, while the dark enemies of bigot hate would deal out our ruin."

The sensation was immense, and every rioter looked upon Duncan McTavish as doomed to immediate and terrible destruction in this world, and for ever, as the intimidation of Father O'Connell did not limit itself to a present life, but extended itself over soul and body in another.

"My good friends, if this riot continue, the polling must be stopped," said Robert Carre to some of those who crowded nearest him. "Mr. O'Connell, as whipper-in of the Popish party, has given you a fine specimen to-day of the eloquence commonly called rigmarole. He wishes to get up a riot that might do for all Ireland together: but little did I dream that ever good, honest Clanmarina could be worked up by any Popish aggressor into becoming the theatre of such a brawl as this. Hats stove in—caps knocked off—shops closed—women shrieking—men hooting—stones hurled, and a fierce onslaught upon me, your neighbour, and from my boyhood, your friend. Duncan McTavish seems likely to fare no better—he could scarcely fare worse, and all through a disciplined and united force of straight-from-Connaught Romish priests. They are mere voteless nobodies, but are acting here as election-agents and touters, who wish by this riotous red-hot zeal to convert us into a belief in scarlet hats and red stockings, and in all the wild dreams of Papal infallibility. There is not much that I can bring myself now to say with any hope of success, but—let me repeat the words used by Sir Robert Peel once,—‘If I am compelled to determine whether I shall give my allegiance to Queen Victoria, or to a mere mockery king of Munster, I ask no time for reflection; my determination is made.’" The men of Clanmarina stood silent as the grave, struck with a sense of their own humiliating condition in being the mere puppets of a priesthood forced to riot against those who were, as their hearts told them, in sober truth, their best friends; but the Irish priests and strangers backed by Fathers Eustace and O'Connell now became more frightfully violent than before. One man threw a large stone at Robert, which struck him next the ear, and produced a deep cut, from which the blood flowed in torrents; and another rioter was about to follow his example, when he was felled to the earth by the still powerful arm of McRonald. The affray which followed passes all description; but the two priests, stooping low to avoid the shower of stones that flew like a hailstorm over their heads, fled in trembling safety from the fearful tempest they had raised. When Robert Carre, after fighting his way from the hustings, and being rendered insensible by a blow of a bludgeon on his head, next awoke to consciousness, he was stretched on a bed in the neat tidy cottage of Mrs. McRonald. His aching forehead was swathed in linen, his broken arm under process of being set by Dr. McIndre, and a warrant was already served upon him for having been out in a riot.

"The jury can hardly bring in a verdict of wilful murder," said McDonald, anxiously, "as nobody has been murdered; but there will probably be three days' imprisonment for the Papists, and three months for us. Father Eustace has taken his oath that not a single Popish stone was thrown, and Robert Carre is strongly suspected of having broken his own arm, and flung brick-bats at himself."

As Dr. McIndre performed all the necessary operations for reducing the injured arm, Bessie stood by the bedside of the endangered sufferer, holding the bandages in her trembling hands, while her wasted but still very beautiful countenance presented a mournful image of most agonized woe—

"Ah ! Grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful hours, with woe's deforming hand,
Have written strange defeatures in my face."—*Shakespeare.*

Robert Carre looked at Bessie through his half-closed eyes, and after some weeks could have rejoiced at any suffering that had brought them thus together again. He had been at a loss to know what was now her state of mind in respect to religion, and without an assurance that her whole heart was turned from Romanism, he had no wish to trust his often-tried feelings by ever again under any circumstances meeting her. Bessie was herself too conscious of her own deep offences against the lover of her girlhood ever again to throw herself voluntarily in his way; but now in the small cottage of Mrs. McDonald, where Dr. McIndre often desired the door to be left open for air, Robert could observe his still beloved Bessie in the little cottage parlour engaged in the busy routine of all her daily occupations.

In the morning, with his eyes apparently closed, he watched her, as she read her Bible, and taught her step-mother's children their simple prayers, and as she uncomplainingly bore all the irritating impatiences of the stern and passionate Mrs. McDonald. He saw Bessie in a sensible gingham dress, and tidy white apron, baking and churning, sewing, washing, and starching, day after day, with ceaseless industry, though with habitual sadness stamped indelibly on her young face; and at night, when all the work of the house was done, she began arranging little tracts, school tickets, and children's prizes, or gently enticing the very irritable Mrs. McDonald to unite with her in prayers of thankfulness for all the unnumbered blessings they had enjoyed throughout the day. It was very difficult to convince Mrs. McDonald that she had any cause to be thankful for any thing. Whatever good befel her was a matter of course, but whatever went contrary to her wishes was considered a positive injury, at which she felt it a relief and indispensable privilege to grumble. Every mortal being she thought ten thousand times better off than herself, and she was an implicit believer in every body's perfect happiness but her own. Her envious nature had no idea

how many hearts are broiling under a veil of smiles, and Mrs. McRonald was unable as she was unwilling to believe that a living being was as superlatively unfortunate as herself. There is a sort of melancholy distinction in being the most miserable of women, and Mrs. McRonald had mentally promoted herself to that position; but the first and foremost pretext for peevish lamentation which she allowed herself to indulge in grumbling at was the dissolution of Bessie's engagement to Robert Carre. Nothing could induce the matter-of-fact step-mother to credit that Bessie had not been first jilted by her lover, and then attempted to cover up her retreat by giving up the world in disconsolate grief which she was too proud to acknowledge. There are people who, when they have once believed anything, will never unbelieve it again, and Mrs. Ronald was one.

"You'll never persuade me, Bessie," she said, dusting the chairs one morning, and vehemently rubbing down her only table, "that a girl like you would prefer a solitary cellar like the coal-hole,—sitting with your eyes fixed on the wall for a week, till your mind became as blind as your body, and living on mouldy bread and water—to a respectable, well-put-on home, and a pious, excellent, industrious husband at Daisybank. Such a farm! ninety cows; and the Carres make a cheese a day—three hundred and sixty-five cheeses every year. I never heard what Robert does with the Sunday's milk; but surely they don't make a cheese on Sunday; yet I am positively assured, and no mistake, that they have one for every day of the year."

"Be easy on that point," said Bessie, with a smile, followed by a deep sigh; "the Carres, old and young, were always good religious people, and most of the milk you are anxious about is distributed that day among their poor labourers' families."

"Such extravagance! Well, these people who set themselves up for being better than anybody, are sometimes, after all, ten times worse. To think of Robert behaving so shamefully to you!"

"Hush, mother, he is in the next room! You are quite mistaken, I assure you."

"Yes, of course, I am always mistaken in your eyes; but the millstone to be seen through had a hole in it, that I soon discovered. Girls are too proud to confess that they have been jilted; but trust me for knowing the world. You never would have buried yourself alive to please an old Popish priest, if Robert had been faithful to you. It must have been his fault; and now that he is up and dressed for the first time to-day, if I do not soon hunt him out of my house and give him a piece of my mind as to his cruel and disgraceful wickedness in jilting you, my name is not Janet McRonald."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Bessie, clasping Mrs. McRonald's arm in real distress, "believe me——"

"Believe a fiddle-stick!" replied Mrs. McRonald, vehemently. "There was something in that whole business I never could rightly

understand, and that you never very clearly explained; but I have a bad opinion of Robert's conduct in the whole upshot, and nothing can alter it. The sooner he picks himself up and leaves my house, now he is out of his bed, the better, for I never could abide a jilt, man or woman. Do you think, Bessie, if your father had jilted me that I would ever have humbled myself to tell on him? But your altered face is enough for me; you are dying by inches, girl, and it is Robert's fault."

"Mother," said Bessie, with a look of anguish which no pen could describe, in her emaciated but still lovely features, "you see, then, that nothing short of death could have made such a change in me, and that I am dying! It is all caused by self-reproach. Do not add to the burden which I am scarcely able to bear, and live another day. Never did man behave to a woman better than Robert behaved to me, and never did any woman behave worse than I did to Robert. My only comfort is that I meant well, but was deceived. Oh, how deceived, none can ever know!—and now I have before me a lifetime of repentance. It shall not be an idle sorrow, mother. While power is given me to move, I shall work for you and yours. I shall live, with a broken heart, for others, when I have not a hope left for myself."

Bessie, looking beautiful in her sorrow, sat down on the nearest chair, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a fit of hysterical weeping, so bitter and desolate, that even Mrs. McDonald stood for some moments aghast with dismay, and with something very like pity; but after a few exceedingly rough attempts at consolation, which only increased Bessie's sufferings, she did the best that could be done, by leaving her alone to her sorrow.

The flood-gates of grief once opened, Bessie felt a melancholy relief in venturing on what she very seldom did, to look back upon the heart-breaking past. In general now she lived from hour to hour in the drudgery of her daily work, but could not bear a thought of what might have been her happy fate; but this day the temptation was not to be resisted, and taking out a lock of Robert's hair, with which in all her former delirium she had never been able to part, she gazed at it through blinding tears; and many a convulsive sob gave utterance to her grief, as she once more pressed it to her lips.

"So you still kept that, Bessie," said a voice trembling with emotion behind her; and looking round her she started, and her eyes could scarcely believe their own evidence when she saw Robert standing by her side, his colour raised, his lip quivering, and his eyes glittering with almost feverish agitation. Robert instantly drew from a case in his hand one long and glossy ringlet of Bessie's hair, and smilingly held it up before her tearful eyes, saying in accents of mournful tenderness, "Since the day we exchanged these in the hayfield, Bessie, three miserable months have passed over us both. It would be difficult to say which has suffered most. The fault was not yours, you well-meaning little dupe, but his who misled you

Bessie! shall we forget everything that has passed, since you and I, then the two happiest people in the world, exchanged these gifts, and shall we fancy that the hour when we did so was only yesterday?"

"Robert! dear, generous Robert!" said Bessie, while fresh tears gushed into her eyes, "If a lifetime of gratitude could reward you—"

"It can, Bessie,—I am already more than rewarded," said young Carre, looking smilingly and fondly at the agitated countenance of Bessie, now glowing with emotion. "And I hope the lifetime may be a long and happy one to us both. Only now let us lose no time in beginning it, as life is too short for any more delays."

The most beautiful rural festival that ever was seen in Scotland, took place at Clanmarina on Thursday last. The entire village seemed covered with flags and flowers, and the entire population were assembled in their holiday dresses,—the sun shone, the birds sang, the children hurra'd. There were hogsheads of porter, and barrels of ale, oxen roasted whole, dancing on the village-green, and bonfires blazing on every eminence. It was the wedding-day of the three happiest couples in Britain; and long may their happiness last, for it is founded on an enlightened obedience to God, and charity to man!

The happy couples looked all so young, that it seemed as if a party of boys and girls were playing at matrimony. Each bridegroom called himself the happiest of men, and felt himself so; while each bride resolved in her heart, that through coming years his utmost hopes should be fulfilled by finding her the best of wives: while Lady Anne, amidst a thousand home feelings and pleasant duties, looks back now with wonder at her former infatuation. "Lady Edith," she said, before taking a tearful leave of her friendly hostess, "Your advice and example have rescued me from being ensnared, and with my whole heart I thank you."

"Dear Lady Anne! it is the pleasantest privilege of age, when our experience can serve the young friends we love, and I cannot look on in silence, when girls like yourself, or poor Bessie, are misled. If an old veteran soldier saw a youth in whom he felt interested, about to enlist in the army, because dazzled by the magnificent dress, and still more magnificent promises of a recruiting officer, might he not feel entitled to warn him against rashly engaging in that, of which he did not know the end? Perhaps his young favourite might reply to every well-meant caution, 'You are quite mistaken! I know all! I was once at a review, and approved of it extremely. There was nothing I did not like. The music was delightful, and this friendly officer assures me that the discipline is a mere nothing. I have only to walk out of the regiment any day, if I tire, for he tells me that those absurd stories are perfectly obsolete now about men being shut up in a black hole, or flogged, or about their being shot for desertion. All is made perfectly easy now, for my friend here tells me I may have an assistant to carry

my gun, whenever I feel fatigued; that I need attend drill only when it suits me; and that I shall never be sent abroad.' When I see girls plunging headlong into ruin, I always think that a clever recruiting officer has enlisted them; and wishing well to all young people, I feel an ardent desire,—oh, how ardent!—to lift up for them the very long black veil that is thrown over the realities of conventual life."

Sir Allan, awakened now to a consciousness of his high position, felt a new estimate of his high duties, and never more so than on the day of his joyful wedding. Flags, bearing his colours of crimson and yellow, were displayed in every crowded window at Clanmarina, and in the surrounding country, which blazed with bonfires. There were ceaseless cheers, with the waving of handkerchiefs, and an enthusiastic crowd: each man wearing a cockade in his hat of crimson and gold. Taking the horses from his carriage, the clansmen drew him, with his lovely bride, along the approach, the bagpipes playing "McAlpine's Gathering," and the banners of the clan fluttering brightly in the sunshine. The Eaglescairn tenantry flocked also round the church; and, in honour of a Protestant landlord, came for once without being preceded by the wooden images of St. Anthony and St. Bridget, while the absence of Father Eustace contributed more than anything to the general hilarity.

Robert and Bessie retired to Daisybank, and Sir Allan to Cairngorum Castle, drawn by the usual four prancing grey horses, which seem to make a point of being always on the spot everywhere for a marriage excursion. The Eaglescairns proceeded to what had once seemed as gloomy a residence as the Castle of Otranto; but now every window was illuminated, and gay flags waving on the tower. As Beatrice entered the splendid hall of Eaglescairn, brilliantly lighted, and filled with servants and retainers, the housekeeper, according to ancient Scottish custom, advanced to the door, and broke a large cake over her head, the fragments of which were scrambled for, with a desperation of eagerness only comparable to that of the California diggers; and during the *melée*, she quietly escaped into the solitary drawing-room, in which so many scenes and circumstances had already occurred to her, of pleasure and pain.

"Miss Turton," said Lord Eaglescairn, when he met her yesterday, "why do you not follow the general fashion of our matrimonial neighbourhood! There is that good, worthy pill-box, Dr. McIndre, for ever playing at backgammon with you, and much in want of exactly such a wife as yourself to keep his model villa cheerful, and to keep him and all his papers in order."

"To be perfectly honest, Lord Eaglescairn,—which is perhaps the best policy.—I will tell you the plain truth; for I believe you to be thoroughly kind-hearted, though fond of taking your hit at me when you can. If Dr. McIndre, six months ago, had wanted a wife, to mix his toddy, to dry his spectacles, to air his newspaper

and to listen patiently when he grumbled about his rheumatism and the bad times, I should have been only too happy then to accept him. But not now. I voluntarily took upon me very solemn vows, and our Protestant consciences cannot break an oath, even with heretics. I refused Dr. McIndre yesterday, because I have been once actually a professed nun, which Bessie never became. I do not deny that it is with great regret I take upon myself the penalty of my mistake, as the worthy Doctor and I might have grown old very comfortably over our tea and backgammon together."

"Dr. McIndre has often told me," observed Lord Eaglescairn, "that his chief dread of marrying arose from the trouble of finding a wife, and the fracas of trousseaux and cakes, bonfires and congratulations; but that if he could any fine day see any lady settled at her work in his drawing-room, beside a cheerful fire, and be told that this was Mrs. McIndre actually arrived, he would be delighted to welcome so pleasant a companion to break his solitude; therefore, only think, Miss Turton, how agreeably surprised he may yet be, if you were to relent. Get a dispensation from the Pope. He will sell you one for ten pounds."

"No, no, I have had enough of such buying and selling. In reference to whatever sins any one may wish to commit, the Pope so unreservedly selling indulgences, might be compared to the man in front of a booth at Greenwich fair, who points to his wares, calling out incessantly, 'Pay your money, and take your choice!' But one thing let me mention, Lord Eaglescairn. You will see no more of Father Eustace in this neighbourhood for ever and ever, as I have a letter from a friend in Italy, to tell me on undoubted authority, that he is to receive from Rome next week a diploma, which constitutes Father Eustace possessor of a new dignity, unsanctioned by law, but not the less magnificent in mere sound: 'The Cardinal Archbishop of Edinburgh and Glasgow, Primus of Scotland,' &c."

"We shall next hear 'The Lord High Rabbi of Dublin,' or the 'Grand Llama of Belgravia,'" said Lord Eaglescairn, indignantly. "These titles would probably take with some excitable minds prodigiously. In the case of Father Eustace, we may be sure that humility will not be one of his cardinal virtues! He is to be enthroned, I hear, with a degree of splendour that the Pope himself might envy, and his first levee is to be held at the Music Hall next Tuesday. The effect of the red hat and stockings upon the minds of imaginative young people is said to be immense."

"No doubt of that," replied Miss Turton with a mournful smile. "Though I used without emotion to see the wax figure of Cardinal Wolsey at Madame Tussaud's in full costume, yet the same scarlet finery on a living individual produced such an effect always on me, that I could not refuse to pay the wearer that more than royal

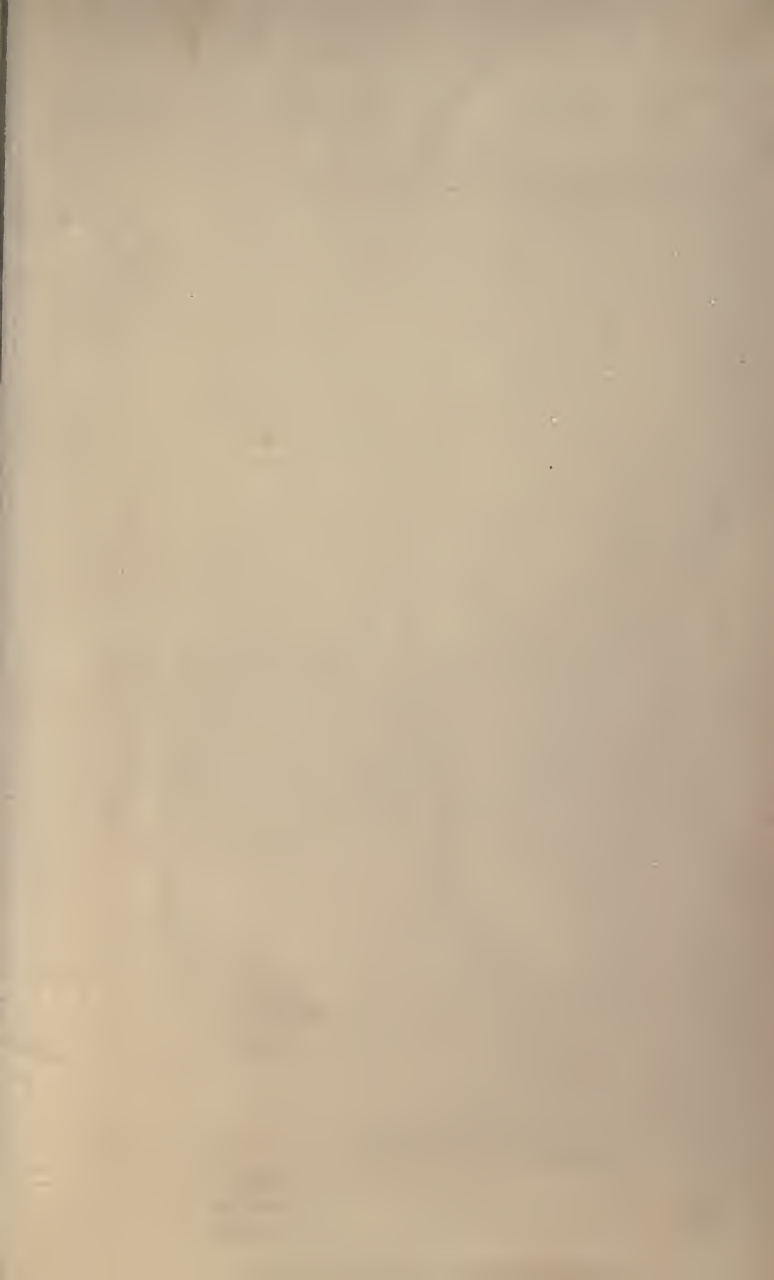
homage, which he evidently expected. The ladies are expected to kiss the Cardinal's hands now, while the clergymen kneel."

"A subscription is going on already to raise funds for a magnificent new Popish Cathedral, to be used at Edinburgh in the meanwhile, till his Eminence gets possession of St. Giles, and the collection already amounts to 1*l.* 1*s.*," added Lord Eaglescairn. "All young people who have quarrelled with their families, or older people who have quarrelled with the world, and all of any description who own estates or property which they cannot enjoy themselves, or use for others, are requested immediately to give up their whole possessions, and be received into the nearest monastery."

"I hear that a Retreat is about to be opened immediately in Charlotte Square, by Mrs. Lorraine," said Lady Anne. "Not an absolute nunnery, but in a half-and-half state, where a full dress rehearsal is allowed to young candidates for the veil, who retire there to ascertain how they like to play at monks and nuns. The whole affair is to be made as agreeable to them as novelty, romance, and flattery can render such a life, till they are enticed onwards to take the irrevocable vows, and after that the curtain drops for ever. This institution skilfully managed by Mrs. Lorraine, is under the special direction of that distinguished individual, now daily expected in scarlet from Rome—

"THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW."

THE END.



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